United Nations A/62/PV.43

General Assembly
Sixty-second session

Official Records

43rd plenary meeting
Thursday, 1 November 2007, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 76 (*continued*)

Report of the International Criminal Court

Note by the Secretary-General (A/62/314)

Mr. Tavares (Portugal): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the President of the International Criminal Court.

Today I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries of Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

The European Union (EU) is firmly committed to ending impunity for the most heinous crimes of concern to the international community. The International Criminal Court (ICC), created almost ten years ago, is one of the greatest achievements in the fight against impunity. The EU reiterates its strong support for the work of the Court.

The importance of the ICC should be seen within the wider context of international order. The Court is importantly placed to contribute to a more peaceful and just world, promoting respect for international humanitarian law, human rights and the rule of law. The European Union remains convinced that peace and justice are not conflicting goals, quite the contrary. In our view, sustainable peace cannot be achieved if the demands for individual accountability for the most serious international crimes are not duly addressed.

States have the primary responsibility for bringing offenders to justice. The ICC will only step in as a last resort, if States fail to carry out their duty. The ICC plays a significant role in ensuring accountability where national judicial systems have failed or are not willing or able to function. As for deterrence and prevention, the European Union views the ICC as an essential instrument for the prevention of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The European Union expresses its appreciation to the Court for its report (A/62/314). The report clearly demonstrates that the Court is a living institution that has achieved substantial progress in its investigations and judicial proceedings. In this respect, the EU shares the Court's concerns in relation to the outstanding arrest warrants arising from the ICC's investigations in Darfur and Uganda. The EU urges all parties to work with the Court to ensure that these individuals are brought to justice as soon as possible. The EU emphasizes the obligation on the Government of Sudan to cooperate with the Court under the terms of Security Council resolution 1593 (2005).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

07-58072 (E)

The 105 States party to the Rome Statute and the four situations before the Court represent significant achievements for a young Court. In this context, we would like to underline three key developments in the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The trial against Mr. Lubanga Dyilo is under preparation, and four victims participated in the hearing through their legal representatives. This was the first time in the history of an international criminal court that victims participated in proceedings in their own right, without being called as witnesses. In that connection, the EU also welcomes the arrest and transfer of Germain Katanga to custody of the ICC custody on 18 October.

The European Union echoes the Secretary-General's statement marking the fifth anniversary of the Court, in which he said that the ICC had already established itself as a centrepiece of a system of international criminal justice. The EU welcomes the Court's increased cooperation with other international and hybrid tribunals in particular the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

We all agree that the Court has taken its first well-grounded steps and that the report shows its achievements. The Court, however, relies critically on effective cooperation and assistance by States, as well as on the United Nations and other international and regional organizations.

As the ICC does not have an enforcement capacity, assistance is particularly needed for the arrest of suspects, the provision of evidence, the relocation of witnesses, the protection of victims and the enforcement of sentences. We stress the importance of cooperation by States Parties and non-States Parties with the Court, both in general and as regards specifically the execution of arrest warrants.

Furthermore, the EU appreciates the deepened cooperation with international organizations, in particular with the United Nations. The United Nations is a critical partner to the ICC in the field, as it may be in a position to provide the Court with evidence or logistical support. The EU invites the Secretary-General to make this support even more tangible on the ground.

The EU and the ICC concluded an agreement on cooperation and assistance in April 2006. The European Union encourages other relevant organizations, including the African Union, to formalize their cooperation with the Court.

The European Union is a strong and active advocate for the universality of the ICC and a dedicated defender of the integrity of the Rome Statute. The EU reiterates its call for the universal ratification of the Rome Statute, as well as of the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Court. The EU recalls its Common Position and Action Plan to support the Court, as well as the array of instruments at its disposal to promote the universality and integrity of the Rome Statute.

The EU also welcomes the ICC's intensified efforts relating to its outreach activities in the field. Reaching out to societies and people affected by crime is paramount for the successful discharge of the wider mandate of the Court. In that respect, the Court's activities are particularly important when it is reaching out to victims, who have a unique role under the Rome Statute.

The European Union wishes to thank Liechtenstein for organizing the intersessional meetings of the Special Working Group on the Crime of Aggression, held at Princeton. Those meetings have proved to be highly conducive to the preparation of provisions relating to the crime of aggression, the definition of which is of interest to the entire United Nations membership. The EU is committed to contribute to the finalization of the work on the crime of aggression and will support solutions that are consistent with the letter and the spirit of the Rome Statute and the United Nations Charter.

The EU would like to underline once again that cooperation and assistance by all of us, the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, remains vital if the Court is to successfully carry out its activities.

Mr. Sealy (Trinidad and Tobago): Trinidad and Tobago has the honour and the privilege to speak on behalf of the members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are States parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on the report of the Court contained in document A/62/314.

That report, which is issued in keeping with article 6 of the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the ICC, provides relevant information on the activities that the Court has carried

out during the past year as it has sought to discharge its mandate in accordance with the provisions of the Rome Statute. We acknowledge the role of the ICC as the only permanent international tribunal charged with the responsibility to prosecute individuals accused of committing the most serious crimes of concern to the international community, namely, genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and — when a definition of the crime is finally adopted pursuant to articles 121 and 123 of the Rome Statute — the crime of aggression.

On 1 July of this year, we celebrated the fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Rome Statute. In a short period of five years, the Court has made substantial progress in putting the necessary systems in place to effect the prosecution of individuals accused of committing crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court, thus ensuring that justice is brought to the hapless victims of serious crimes, without prejudice to the rights of the accused.

In that regard, CARICOM States parties note with satisfaction the progress made by the Court in March 2007 with the confirmation of charges in the Thomas Lubanga Dyilo case, relating to the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and with the preparations for the commencement of his trial. CARICOM is further pleased to note the arrest and surrender of Germain Katanga earlier this month and the prompt commencement of pre-trial proceedings in his case.

However, we are concerned about the non-apprehension to date of those accused of committing crimes in the Darfur region of the Sudan and also in northern Uganda, despite the issuance of arrest warrants for those individuals. We are satisfied that the Prosecutor has conducted adequate investigations into those cases, and we wish to reiterate previous calls for the relevant authorities of the States concerned and other entities to cooperate with the Court in the execution of the arrest warrants and the surrender of the accused persons to face trial.

CARICOM States parties recognize and affirm the importance of cooperation between national justice and international criminal justice. The recent conclusion of the memorandum of understanding regulating the establishment and functioning of the Court on the territory of the Central African Republic is exemplary.

The jurisdiction of the ICC is, however, complementary to that of national courts. This principle, which is enshrined in article 1 of the Rome Statute, is a clear demonstration that the drafters of the Rome Statute were conscious of the sovereign right of States to prosecute their nationals accused of the commission of crimes within the scope of the Statute.

Correspondingly, we also recognize that States have a legal obligation to cooperate with the Court in several areas, including through the execution of arrest warrants, the surrender of accused persons, the transfer of prisoners, the enforcement of sentences and the protection and relocation of witnesses. In that respect, we call upon all States parties that have not yet done so to enact comprehensive legislation to give domestic legal effect to their binding legal obligations under the Statute. The enactment of implementing legislation would not only ensure that States have the legal basis for the prosecution of those accused of the commission of crimes domestically, in keeping with the well-known principle of law *Nulla poena sine lege*, but would also assist in negating any possible challenges to the jurisdiction of the Court in instances where a State has referred a matter to the Court. We also call on States parties and others to ratify as soon as possible the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the ICC so that the Court can perform its work in their jurisdictions in an unencumbered manner.

We are encouraged by the steps taken by the Court to meet with several individuals, organizations and groups, including representatives of the African Union and of African States, in the context of the relationship agreement between the ICC and the African Union. Additionally, we welcome with appreciation the signing of the Headquarters Agreement between the International Criminal Court and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which defines the relationship between the Court and the host State.

Over the past year, the Court has shown great resolve in becoming a truly global judicial institution. In addition to welcoming five new States parties — including Saint Kitts and Nevis, of the CARICOM region — the Court has embarked on an enhanced outreach programme. That has led to a greater awareness of the role of the Court, especially in the situation countries, thereby reducing any misconceptions concerning its operations, while also enhancing its legitimacy.

The preamble to the Rome Statute contemplates cooperation between the Court and the United Nations, while recognizing the independence of the Court. Consequently, we note with satisfaction the contacts made between officials of both institutions during the past year on matters germane to their respective work programmes. International confidence in the work of the Court was also strengthened with the conclusion of the memorandum of understanding between the Court and the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Through the provision of assistance for the conduct of the Charles Taylor trial, the ICC has demonstrated its commitment to assist in the fight against impunity in any part of the globe.

The sixth session of the Assembly of States Parties to the ICC will be held here at United Nations Headquarters from 30 November to 16 December 2007. We are hopeful that attendance during this session of the Assembly of States Parties will surpass that of all previous sessions because all 105 States parties and all signatory States and observer States are represented at United Nations Headquarters in New York. This will be an opportune moment for the continuation of efforts aimed at universalization of the Rome Statute.

Included among the items on the agenda of the forthcoming session of the Assembly of States Parties is the election of judges to fill the judicial vacancies occasioned by the retirement of three judges, including Judge Hudson-Phillips from Trinidad and Tobago. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has announced, and CARICOM has endorsed, the candidature of retired Justice of Appeal Jean Permanand, a person of high moral integrity and a distinguished jurist with competence in criminal law and procedure, to fill one of those three vacancies.

CARICOM States parties are of the view that the International Criminal Court is an international judicial institution of which the international community can be justly proud. These States will continue to steadfastly support the ICC and will encourage other States, including CARICOM member States, to adhere to the Rome Statute since we are firmly convinced that it is only through the effective functioning of an institution such as this that we can put an end to the culture of impunity for these grave crimes of concern to the international community and bring peace and stability to countries where these heinous crimes have been committed.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ). We wish to thank Judge Philippe Kirsch, the President of the International Criminal Court (ICC), for his positive and direct presentation of the report on the work and situation of the Court.

Since its creation, just five years ago, the ICC has made important progress. There are now 105 States parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC. The Office of the Prosecutor is currently investigating crimes in four situations. Arrest warrants have been issued against alleged perpetrators in three of these situations. In January this year, the Court confirmed charges of war crimes against Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, a former Congolese militia leader. We await his trial, the first ever before the International Criminal Court, due to start in early 2008.

CANZ welcomes and commends the recent action by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to surrender Germain Katanga to the Court. This surrender provides a timely example of the results that can be achieved with the cooperation of the situation country.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand acknowledge, however, that the ICC continues to face major challenges. Perhaps the most significant of these arises from the fact that the Court is heavily reliant on support and assistance from States and, on occasion, from international organizations and others, in order to fulfil its mandate under the Rome Statute. This is well-illustrated by the current situation with the six outstanding arrest warrants for the Darfur and Uganda investigations. The ICC can succeed only if perpetrators believe it has the power to act. This requires the cooperation of all States to give effect to arrest warrants and assist with other ongoing investigations.

CANZ calls on the Governments of Sudan and Uganda to play their part in the ICC's work to bring an end to impunity for the most serious international crimes. In particular, we urge the Government of the Sudan to take all steps to arrest Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs, Ahmad Harun, and militia leader, Ali Kushayb, and transfer them to the Court for trial. Acting on these arrest warrants will demonstrate not only respect for the rule of law but also support for international criminal justice generally.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand consider that support for and cooperation with the Court is critical to its success, although such support can take a variety of different forms. For example, New Zealand recently signed an agreement with the ICC to provide specific cooperation. We would encourage all States parties to consider what practical measures they can take to support the work of the Court.

The ICC has continued to develop cooperative relationships with a number of international courts and tribunals. A unique and unprecedented level of cooperation exists between the Court and the Special Court for Sierra Leone. We welcome the assistance the ICC is providing to this Special Court in relation to the trial of Charles Taylor. We see this as helping to achieve the broader goal of combating criminal impunity which underpins the very establishment of the ICC.

Universal ratification of the Rome Statute is also crucial to the ICC's success. If we are to ensure that the perpetrators of the most world's most egregious crimes are denied a safe haven, we must step up our collective efforts to promote the universality of the Rome Statute. In that regard, Canada, Australia and New Zealand welcomed, at last year's assembly of States parties, the adoption of the plan of action for achieving universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute. Since then, we have also welcomed Japan as a party to the Rome Statute. We hope that Japan's accession will encourage additional States to join, particularly States from Asia.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand have continued their efforts at the regional level to encourage further ratifications. For example, Australia recently took the opportunity presented by the ICC's Prosecutor's visit to Australia in August, to convene a regional seminar attended by 70 officials from the Asia-Pacific, including ministers and senior Government officials, to promote accession to the Rome Statute.

Since September 2000, Canada's International Criminal Court and Accountability Campaign, funded by Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, has provided more than $4.3 million in funding to support events and projects that promote ratification and implementation of the Rome Statute, assist with the effective functioning of the Court and other international criminal tribunals and provide education and outreach related to the ICC and other international criminal tribunals.

CANZ will continue to provide the ICC with our strong and unwavering support. We call on all Member States to do the same.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): I would like to thank the President of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Mr. Philippe Kirsch, for presenting the report of the ICC to the General Assembly today.

The Court has continued to make important progress in its operations and judicial work. This is evidenced, in particular, by the situation regarding the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We note with satisfaction the recent surrender of a second indicted person in that situation, which will give the ICC a further opportunity to prove its excellence.

We commend all organs of the Court for their highly professional, independent and impartial work over the last year. Indeed, we have no doubt that the ICC is working in the manner envisioned by the drafters of the statute and its activities in The Hague and in the field clearly have an impact on the situations under consideration, but also a preventative impact in general.

As outlined in the ICC's report, the Court continues to rely and depend on cooperation by States and international organizations with respect to the operational aspect of its work, in particular, arrest and surrender. We note with great concern that currently six arrest warrants are still awaiting their execution. For some of them, this has been the case for more than two years. This state of affairs is unacceptable. We call upon all States, parties and non-parties alike, as well as on other relevant actors, such as the Security Council, to consider the consequences of such inaction at this juncture. The commitment to end impunity for the worst crimes is as relevant today as it was at the time of adoption of the Rome Statute.

In Rome, we sent a clear signal to past and potential future perpetrators of such crimes that they will not get away with their actions. The Statute has, furthermore, given a firm legal answer to what some like to refer to as the "peace versus justice" dilemma, in the form of a legal obligation to cooperate with the ICC, in particular, regarding arrest and surrender. This obligation is not negotiable and must be fully implemented.

As far as the United Nations is concerned, cooperation is required at the technical level, as regulated by the United Nations-International Criminal Court Relationship Agreement, as well as at the political level.

The Security Council has a very important role to play in this respect. Both the Rome Statute and the Relationship Agreement envisage a mutually beneficial relationship between the ICC and the United Nations, reflecting the nature of the Court as an institution that promotes and delivers justice, based on the principle of complementarity, and thereby contributes to peace and security.

Liechtenstein has always strongly supported the International Criminal Court, and continues to do so as the Court begins to leave its mark in the system of international institutions. We welcome Japan as the 105th State party to the Rome Statute and call upon other States that have not yet ratified the Statute to consider doing so in the near future. We fully respect the approach of some States that continue to evaluate the merits of ratification or accession and the difficulties attached thereto, and encourage them to enter into a dialogue with the Court and with other States parties with a view to addressing any concerns. While the number of States parties will continue to rise, it can already be clearly stated that the entry into force of the Statute has brought about a paradigm shift towards the rule of law that is irreversible.

We look forward to the sixth session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute, to be held here at Headquarters from 30 November to 14 December 2007, and we hope that all States will use this opportunity to participate actively, as members or as observers. In this respect, we will once again place great emphasis on the work on the definition of the crime of aggression. Our mission in New York organized for the fourth time an intersessional meeting on the crime of aggression at Princeton University in June 2007, where further progress was made on this important question. We look forward to the continuation of this constructive dialogue among States parties, as well as non-States parties, as we get closer to the Review Conference.

Mrs. Nguyen Thi Thanh Ha (Viet Nam): Five years ago, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) entered into force, marking an historic event in the development of international criminal law. My delegation today thanks Judge Philippe Kirsch, President of the ICC, for having presented the Court's report, submitted to the General Assembly in document A/62/314. My delegation also shares the view expressed in paragraph 4 of the report, which states that

> "By helping to put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious international crimes, the Court is intended to contribute to the prevention of such crimes and to the maintenance of peace and security".

By 1 October 2007, the number of States parties to the Rome Statute reached 105, a figure demonstrating the strong support of United Nations Member States for the Court. The activities of the ICC, as shown in the report, once again reaffirm the view of the United Nations Secretary-General that the Court is a centrepiece of a system of international criminal justice. So far, four situations have been referred to the Court. The vast amount of communications relating to purported crimes that the Court has been receiving also testifies to its increasing prestige. Cooperation between the ICC and the United Nations, States, international organizations and civil society continues to be promoted.

While taking note of the substantial progress made by the International Criminal Court, it should be emphasized that the Court's jurisdiction will not be complete until the crime of aggression is defined and included in the Rome Statute. The Special Working Group on the Crime of Aggression of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute has made great efforts to define the act of aggression and the conditions for the Court to exercise jurisdiction over this crime. The sixth session of the Assembly of States Parties, to be convened in New York at the end of this month, is expected to offer another opportunity for fruitful discussions of this important, unsettled part of the Court's jurisdiction.

Viet Nam has been following the development of the ICC with great interest. We have stated our support many times for an independent and objective international criminal court that complements national juridical systems and operates in accordance with the fundamental principles of international law. In fact, the competent authorities in Viet Nam are seriously studying the possibility of acceding to the Rome Statute. We take particularly great interest in the work

of the Special Working Group on the Crime of Aggression and support General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX), adopted at its twenty-ninth session, as an important guide to the Group's substantive work.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland would first like to express its gratitude to President Philippe Kirsch for presenting the third annual report of the International Criminal Court (ICC) (A/62/314), covering the main developments in the Court's activities and cooperation between the Court and the United Nations. Switzerland would also like to express its appreciation to the Court's officials and staff for their outstanding work in carrying out the colossal task bestowed upon them.

Switzerland welcomes the positive cooperation between the Court and various United Nations offices, as well as the Court's institutional support to the Special Court for Sierra Leone in hosting the proceedings of the Charles Taylor case. It also welcomes the support to the ICC from several States, in particular the various bilateral arrangements that have been concluded with the Court on specific issues of cooperation.

As mentioned in the report, the Court is up and running, and four situations have been referred to it. Switzerland welcomes the important progress made in 2007 — namely, the first referral of a case, Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, to the trial stage, and the transfer to The Hague of Germain Katanga by the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The very fact that after such a short period of time, the Court is already investigating and has started legal proceedings in four situations confirms that the establishment of a permanent international criminal court was a very much needed development in international law. States, as well as the United Nations as a whole, worked very hard to reach an agreement on the Statute of the Court and to achieve its establishment. Five years after its creation, the ICC has already come a long way. The efforts of States and the United Nations to support and promote the Court's work should not, however, waver. On the contrary, the international community and States individually must, more than ever, strive to pursue these efforts.

Switzerland wishes to stress the positive effects of the Court's activities in the field. One notable example concerns the developments in northern Uganda. Following the issuance of arrest warrants by the Court, the humanitarian situation has improved considerably, and peace negotiations have become possible.

Switzerland is convinced that there cannot be lasting peace and security worldwide without international justice. The international community has very high expectations for the Court. Indeed, the Court is expected to play a central role in the fight against impunity and in providing justice — two elements that are crucial in reaching lasting peace and security, in particular in post-conflict situations. This task is vital.

The ICC was provided, through the Rome Statute, with the necessary jurisdiction and legal tools to try those responsible for the most heinous crimes in cases where States that have jurisdiction over such crimes are unwilling or unable to complete such proceedings themselves.

The Court is not lacking the financial resources to carry out its mandate at this stage, despite some remaining arrears. What the Court is lacking, however, are the enforcement tools necessary to accomplish its tasks. The Court therefore relies heavily on the support and cooperation of States. As President Kirsch rightly pointed out in his report, States are the enforcement pillar of the international criminal justice system.

Switzerland would like to stress the important role States must play in supporting and cooperating with the International Criminal Court. It is the responsibility of the States, under the Rome Statute and in line with the aims of the United Nations Charter in terms of upholding peace and security, to support and fully cooperate with the Court.

Switzerland strongly believes that the relationship between States and the Court is based on reciprocity. Not only do States have high expectations for the Court, but the Court also has high expectations vis-à-vis States. The Court will be able to meet these expectations and fulfil its mandate only if States provide their full support.

Switzerland would also like to recall that full cooperation with the Court must exist at all stages, whether during the investigation period or when enforcing decisions of the Court, notably arrest warrants. Furthermore, cooperation is not only needed from States directly concerned by the cases under the Court's scrutiny, but also from other States. Indeed, as was pointed out in the third annual report, investigating

the situations referred to the Court has involved activities both on the territories of the four relevant States and in over 25 other countries during the reporting period. It is therefore crucial that all States, and not merely those directly involved in cases before the Court, cooperate with the Court. In this regard, cooperation provided by non-States parties is not only provided for under the Statute, it is also particularly welcome.

Finally, Switzerland fully agrees with the report's view according to which "[t]he aims of the States Parties to the Rome Statute in establishing the Court overlap with the purposes and principles of the United Nations" (*A/62/314, para. 4*). This message supports the idea that the Rome Statute should be of universal scope. Switzerland therefore calls upon all States that have not yet done so to join the Rome Statute as soon as possible.

Mr. Manuel Pérez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My country has supported and will continue to support the establishment of an impartial, non-selective, efficient and just international criminal court that complements the national systems of justice and is truly independent, hence rid of subordinations to political interests that could distort its essence.

The International Criminal Court's lack of independence is of concern, considering the way in which its relations with the Security Council have been defined. Article 16 of the Rome Statute grants power to the Council to suspend investigations or indictments carried out by the Court, and article 5 of the same text purports to regulate in the future the Criminal Court's jurisdiction based on the determination by the Security Council that an act of aggression has been committed by a State. These two elements call into question the true efficiency and independence of the Court in its work.

Also of concern are actions by the United States aimed at signing bilateral immunity agreements exempting its citizens from the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction. Such agreements not only preclude handing over to the Court a great many persons, including former and current Government officials, military personnel and United States citizens in general, but they do not include that country's obligation to investigate and try those persons. Cuba denounces such actions, which are clearly aimed at weakening the efficiency and credibility of the ICC and dodging the system of international criminal responsibility of its citizens, in open violation of the rules of international law.

The Cuban delegation has participated with particular interest in all phases of the establishment of the International Criminal Court and recognizes the relevance of the Rome Statute for international law. However, basic expectations set at the beginning of the process, such as the elaboration of a definition of the crime of aggression, have not yet been met.

We hope that the Special Working Group on the Crime of Aggression, open to all States Members of the United Nations on an equal footing, can carry out its work satisfactorily, elaborating a broadly accepted definition of this crime under which its perpetrators can be tried and condemned. In this regard, we consider that the Assembly of States Parties should provide more possibilities for the functioning of the Special Working Group, assigning it more time within its agenda and convening intersessional meetings, as required.

Once again, the Cuban delegation was not able to participate in the informal meeting of the Special Working Group, which was held in Princeton, because the United States authorities denied without justification permission for two Cuban representatives to travel beyond the 25-mile radius, measured from Columbus Circle, despite the fact that permission was requested within the deadline established for it. Officials from the Cuban Mission to the United Nations are subject to this discriminatory restriction, which is in violation of the Headquarters Agreement and the rules of diplomatic law.

For Cuba, a small country blockaded economically and financially, which has endured countless aggressions by the greatest Power that has ever existed, it is very difficult to take the decision to join the Rome Statute without there being a clear and precise definition of the crime of aggression. We have upheld and continue to uphold a constructive position towards the establishment of an international criminal justice system that is truly impartial, efficient, independent and complementary to national jurisdictions. In this regard, we have followed with interest the evolution and functioning of this new institution, inter alia, through our participation as observers in meetings of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute.

My delegation reaffirms its will to contribute to the implementation of a truly efficient international criminal justice system, in accordance with the rules of international law and, in particular, the Charter of the United Nations.

Mrs. Juul (Norway): Norway welcomes the third annual report of the International Criminal Court (ICC) (A/62/314) and would like to thank the President of the ICC, Judge Philippe Kirsch, for his presentation.

Norway is a staunch supporter of the ICC, and we are very pleased to see the progress it has made during the past year. This year, the ICC celebrated the fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Rome Statute. In spite of its young age, the Court is already steadily integrating itself into legal systems, international institutions and international relations.

The relationship between the ICC and the United Nations is of great importance. Ending climates of impunity requires determined cooperation by interlocutors who have international peace, justice and security as their common goals and their common ambition. The ICC is independent, but it has strong legal, historical and operational ties with the United Nations. The United Nations seeks to promote peace and justice based on human rights. Those are distinct but closely related objectives. They may be difficult to achieve simultaneously, but we have to strive for their achievement. In its quest for the attainment of those objectives, the ICC is an effective and important tool for ending impunity and promoting the rule of law.

The ICC can bring perpetrators of mass atrocities to justice when national systems are not able or willing to do so. The principle of complementarity provides a safety net. That is why the success of the ICC should never be evaluated solely on the basis of the number of cases it hears. We must remember that the mere existence of the Court is having an impact on national systems, which are increasingly geared towards prevention and prosecution.

The success of the Rome Statute should therefore be measured in terms of the overall decrease in impunity for such crimes, not in terms of the number of defendants brought to The Hague. Moreover, whenever national authorities investigate, prosecute and pass judgement in cases concerning serious international crimes, that in itself reaffirms the core objective of the ICC: that perpetrators of such crimes will be held accountable.

The interplay between the Court and the United Nations is made clear in the Rome Statute itself and in the Relationship Agreement between the two parties. The preamble of the Rome Statute reaffirms the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular that all States shall refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations. The ICC aspires to act in accordance with those purposes and principles.

That is also apparent from the role that the Security Council is given in the Statute. Referral by the Security Council is one of the ICC's trigger mechanisms. The Security Council can also defer investigations or prosecutions in a resolution adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter.

It is with great satisfaction that we welcome the strengthening of the relationship between the ICC and the United Nations. We urge all States and international organizations to support the Court and the United Nations in their efforts to achieve their common goals. Justice is also an important building block for peace, and the international community must ensure that the foundation for peace is solid and that it stands the test of time.

Norway welcomes the Organization's support in facilitating the ICC's operation in the field. We are also pleased to note that, under the arrangements set out in the Relationship Agreement, the United Nations provided facilities and services for the resumed fifth session of the Assembly of States Parties, which was held at Headquarters at the beginning of the year. The sixth session will also be held at Headquarters, from 30 November to 14 December.

Norway welcomes the plan of action for achieving universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute, and we will contribute actively to the achievement of its full implementation. We are pleased to note that today, 105 States are parties to the Rome Statute. That is also a geographical reflection of the regions represented in the General Assembly. In that respect, it is a great pleasure to welcome Japan as the most recent entry on the list of States parties. That is an important step towards universality. The number of States parties is rising year by year, and Norway strongly hopes that the ICC will enjoy universal adherence in the future.

The ICC depends on the cooperation of States parties. All States parties must do their utmost to provide the ICC with the best possible working conditions. Norway expects States that have legal obligations under the Statute or that have entered into cooperation agreements with the ICC to fulfil their obligations and to demonstrate their commitment to justice in practice. Those States have a responsibility to proclaim the Court's true nature and its vital importance in the pursuit of justice.

It is with grave concern that we note that six arrest warrants are outstanding: two pertaining to the situation in Darfur and four pertaining to the situation in Uganda. We urge all the States involved to fulfil their responsibility to make those warrants effective.

It is also important that non-States parties give the ICC their support. We were pleased to receive the news that Ukraine has acceded to the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the ICC. It is the first non-State party to do so, and we encourage other States to follow that example.

The interplay among the various courts and tribunals in the international criminal justice system is important for the development of sustainable jurisprudence. We therefore welcome the memorandum of understanding between the ICC and the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The ICC is providing assistance to enable the Special Court for Sierra Leone to conduct the trial of Charles Taylor in The Hague. We would also like to draw particular attention to the ICC's Legal Tools Project. That practical and analytical tool, which is under continuous development, is funded by the Norwegian Government, inter alia. It aims to rationalize the way in which a number of institutions and individuals work with regard to international crimes. The goal is to increase the quality of such work flows and to increase general access to precise information concerning international criminal law.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm Norway's firm and long-standing commitment to the integrity of the Rome Statute and to an effective and credible International Criminal Court. We believe that the ICC should enjoy the broadest possible support on the part of all States. We also believe that the long-term interests of all nations, irrespective of size, region or political orientation, are served by strengthening the rule of law and promoting justice. We all share the universal values related to the protection of human dignity. Such protection is enhanced through concerted action to suppress the most serious crimes that concern the international community as a whole.

Mr. Chávez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank Judge Philippe Kirsch, President of the International Criminal Court (ICC), for the comprehensive and detailed introduction of his annual report on the work of the Court (A/62/314).

The International Criminal Court was established not only to be an effective tool for ensuring that the perpetrators of the most serious crimes are punished, but also to serve as an element of prevention and deterrence with regard to the commission of such atrocities. Likewise, the assistance provided by the ICC to the Special Court for Sierra Leone in the trial of Charles Taylor, former President of Liberia, is an example of the Court's substantial contribution to a broader system for promoting international criminal justice and an international system in which the rule of law is paramount.

The progress made by the ICC during the reporting period has been significant in terms of both investigations and judicial proceedings. In particular, we highlight the surrender of Germain Katanga to the Court, where he will be prosecuted for alleged commission of crimes against humanity and war crimes. We note the cooperation given by the Democratic Republic of the Congo in this context, as well as the decision of the Prosecutor to open an investigation into the situation in the Central African Republic.

As its President has said, for the International Criminal Court to fulfil its mandate, it must receive the support and cooperation of States, of international organizations and of non-governmental organizations, among other possible sources of support. Peru therefore urges all States to cooperate so that the arrest warrants issued by the Court may be executed. Also, we believe that the United Nations, including the Security Council, should offer assistance in this regard within the existing legal framework of cooperation.

In this regard, we regret that, to date, none of the members of the Lord's Resistance Army for whom arrest warrants have been issued have been arrested. Also, because the situation in Darfur was referred to the Court by the Security Council in 2005, through its resolution 1593 (2005), there is a legal obligation to cooperate with the Court based on the Charter of the

United Nations. That is why we hope that these arrest warrants will be promptly executed. The Security Council, for its part, must maintain the relevance of its decisions by ensuring compliance.

We are pleased with the steps taken to strengthen international cooperation, especially with the United Nations, above all on regarding facilitating the Court's activities in the field — a particularly sensitive area where enormous challenges arise. The safety of Court personnel, witnesses and victims is a matter of constant concern. We urge all international organizations which are present in the field to join their efforts to those of the Court.

In conclusion, I would like to recall that Peru strongly supports the fight against impunity. We thus reaffirm at this time our commitment to contribute so that the International Criminal Court can effectively fulfil its mandate and promote the integrity of its Statute.

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): We are making the following remarks, born of our national perspective, which has been shaped through the experience we have gained through the operations of an international criminal court on our territory, that is, the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Before doing so, we would like to express our heartfelt welcome to those States that have joined the Rome Statute since the International Criminal Court's (ICC) report to this body last year. Universality remains a critical goal if we wish to see the International Criminal Court reach its full potential as a key actor in the fight against impunity worldwide and as an important and necessary component of lasting peace. We look forward to welcoming more new States parties in the future, and we continue to urge our friends that have not yet signed or ratified the Rome Statute to do so as soon as possible.

The report delivered this morning by Court President Kirsch (see A/62/PV.42), whom we thank once again for his ongoing commitment and his leadership of the Court, shows that, in many respects, tremendous progress has been made. The arrest and transfer of Germain Katanga to face trial for crimes allegedly committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is surely an important step for which we have all been waiting. We very much hope that this second arrest will form the centre of a swiftly moving snowball, around which more arrests will come, particularly those of accused whose warrants have been outstanding for such a long time now.

Like many others, we remain concerned that there are fugitives from justice who continue to escape facing international criminal proceedings, and we fervently hope that this situation will not be allowed to continue, whether it be Mladic and Karadzic continuing to evade the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia or the six individuals for whom there are outstanding arrest warrants at the ICC.

The International Criminal Court may be the bold new centrepiece of the international criminal justice system, but it needs cooperation and support in order to flourish and to retain its strength and vitality. The real deterrence value of the ICC, and indeed of any criminal justice institution, is the likelihood of enforcement of its processes and the legal norms and proscriptions that are its foundation. The critical contribution of justice and accountability to assisting societies to reach lasting, sustainable and prosperous peace can be truly realized only when all components of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction are given sufficient space to do their job.

Sierra Leone recognized this with the Special Court, to the extent that our parliament decided that orders of the Special Court should have direct application in Sierra Leone, translating into law the level of commitment to cooperation that the Special Court needed then and that the ICC needs now. We call on all States to cooperate with the ICC, in particular through enforcing the outstanding arrest warrants, and in so doing, to strengthen the international criminal justice system and its potential to deter such horrendous crimes.

We continue to welcome the emphasis the Court is putting on its strategic vision and the work it is doing to conceptualize, refine and present that vision. The primary purpose of the International Criminal Court, indeed the raison d'être of the international criminal justice system as a whole, is to provide justice and redress to the thousands of men, women and children who have been victims of the most serious crimes that prick the conscience of humankind. It is difficult to do that from thousands of miles away from the scenes of the crimes, and we must recognize and commend the efforts being undertaken to ensure that affected populations understand, engage with and feel a stake in the Court's work.

For this reason, we welcome the emphasis in this latest report (see A/62/314) on the ICC's outreach work. The prominence given to this issue underscores what Sierra Leone has learned through its own experiences with the Special Court, which we hope will stand as a lesson for all international courts and tribunals: outreach is a core function of such a court, and it is an operational necessity. We therefore continue to insist that the Court's outreach programme be given top priority and urge the Court to continue to develop its strategic vision, to intensify its efforts for Darfur and to implement its plan for outreach in the Central African Republic as a matter of utmost urgency.

As we have said before, we have a strong preference for proceedings to be held in the countries or regions where the crimes took place, and we trust that this remains an important goal also for the Court. We continue to look forward to further developments in this respect.

The presence of Court President Kirsch here today is an important, outward symbol of the ever-growing relationship between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court. We have always said that the cooperation and support of the United Nations will be of critical importance for the International Criminal Court to become a fully effective international criminal justice institution.

We can now see in action how important it is to nurture and develop that relationship, particularly with the support the United Nations provided for the arrest and transfer of Mr. Katanga. We look forward to the continuing dialogue and cooperation between the Court, international and regional organizations and all other actors around the world who remain committed to ensuring that the Court can reach its full potential.

Allow me to conclude by restating our hope and desire that one day, the building blocks of international criminal justice, which we are discussing here today, will be at the foundation of a world in which everyone can rest assured that those who commit war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide can run but cannot hide: they will surely be brought to justice.

Mr. Argüello (Argentina) (spoke in Spanish): Argentina wishes to convey its appreciation and gratitude to the President of the International Criminal Court, Mr. Philippe Kirsch, for his presentation of the third report of the Court (see A/62/314) to the General Assembly.

Several positive elements of the report should be highlighted. In 2002, the Rome Statute had received 60 ratifications; this year, 105 States are parties. That shows that the efforts towards universality and full application of the Rome Statute are achieving results.

Also, referring the situation in Darfur, the Sudan, to the International Criminal Court was a historic decision, from both a legal and a political standpoint. That precedent shows that there cannot be peace, security and reconciliation if those who violate human rights continue to enjoy impunity in countries in conflict or during the peacebuilding period. That connection was underlined by Argentina on numerous occasions during its membership of the Security Council in 2005 and 2006.

Another development that shows that the Court is fully operational has been the arrest by the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo of Germain Katanga and his subsequent transfer to the International Criminal Court in October 2007 on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Thus, two persons have now been transferred to the Court on charges that fall within its jurisdiction.

Moreover, the decision of the Prosecutor in May to open a new investigation into the situation in the Central African Republic, along with the situation in Uganda and the two aforementioned cases, sends a clear message to the perpetrators of crimes committed in the past and to potential perpetrators in the future: even if they are not brought to justice in their own countries, there is still the credible possibility of international prosecution. Securing the detention of the wanted persons who remain at large is fundamental to reaching that goal and thus maximizing the Court's influence.

In that sense, we must not forget that there are still six outstanding arrest warrants. States parties and non-parties alike must cooperate with the Court with regard to the execution of arrest warrants. As the Court does not have its own police, the cooperation of States, United Nations regional organizations and other actors is essential to achieving the objectives stated by the States parties in the preamble to the Rome Statute.

In that regard, in late 2006, Argentina implemented the provisions of the Rome Statute and

established the relations of cooperation between Argentina and the Court in its national legislation and ratified the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court, allowing the Court to act without limitation in our country's territory.

We also welcome the headquarters agreement with the host country, the Netherlands, and the full functioning of the Court's New York liaison office with the United Nations, which will help promote cooperation between the two organizations. We hope for greater support by the Security Council through broader mandates for peacekeeping operations in places where there are situations under investigation by the Court, in order to support the Court in its task.

Finally, in view of the fact that the purposes and principles of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court reflect those of the Charter of the United Nations and are thus universal, Argentina calls upon all States that have not yet done so to accede to and ratify the Rome Statute, in order to guarantee universality in the fight against impunity.

Mr. Muharemi (Croatia): I take pleasure and pride in the fact that we can once again welcome His Excellency Judge Philippe Kirsch, President of the International Criminal Court (ICC), to the General Assembly. As Croatia aligns itself fully with the statement delivered by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union, please allow me to highlight just a few points that, in our opinion, deserve the full attention of the United Nations community.

The annual report presented today (see A/62/314) reflects the steady progress that the Court has achieved over just five years of its existence. We are proud of the impact it has achieved thus far. Its establishment, which was our common endeavour, was not an end in itself. It remains our common responsibility to effectively prevent conflicts, protect and promote human rights and uphold international humanitarian law and the rule of law in general.

Without putting an end to impunity for the most serious international crimes, those efforts will remain incomplete. Nothing can serve the interests of justice better than a functioning and credible Court. It is reassuring to note that, in all aspects of its mandate, the ICC has made its presence felt.

However, the experience of the ad hoc criminal tribunals has made it all too clear how dependent justice is on the goodwill, not just of States, but of other international actors as well. State cooperation and support are indispensable for making justice operational. We believe it is equally important that other actors — both regional and global, beginning with the United Nations — do not lose sight of the ICC dimension when dealing with issues of peace and security that are of relevance to the Court's mandate.

The Court does not operate in a textbook reality, and it would be wrong to contemplate its mandate without paying attention to the ways its existence and actions can influence the decision-makers on the ground. However, the ICC is not a political tool. It is the expression of all our collective will, embodied in a treaty. It is first and foremost a judicial body that deals with individual criminal accountability. That is of paramount importance, because all crimes are individual. Timely and just prosecution and punishment are an essential ingredient of sustainable peace.

Mr. Jevremović (Serbia): I wish to thank the President of the International Criminal Court, Judge Philippe Kirsch, for his presentation of the report of the International Criminal Court (see A/62/314) today. With four situations before the Court, it is now evident that the International Criminal Court has evolved into a pillar of international justice, promoting the values of international humanitarian law and furthering the ongoing quest for a world based on justice and accountability.

The accession of Japan to the Rome Statute as its 105th State party is yet another significant step towards achieving the universality of the Court and its noble goals, and it should be commended as such. We therefore wish to call on States to continue to support universal ratification of the Rome Statute.

The Republic of Serbia fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union but would like to reiterate certain points from a national perspective.

My country is one of the founders of the International Criminal Court and, as such, it has committed itself to incorporating all its obligations under the Rome Statute into its domestic legal system. The new constitution of the Republic of Serbia is but one of the documents that bear testimony to that process.

As my country was among the first to have ratified the Rome Statute, I am pleased to recall the activities that we have undertaken in order to facilitate the work of the Court. The Republic of Serbia was among the first countries to ratify the agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the ICC. At this moment, we are in the process of negotiating an agreement on persons charged by the ICC serving their prison sentences in Serbia. An initiative has been launched for concluding an agreement on witness relocation. Let me also point out that a working group has been set up in the Serbian Ministry of Justice to prepare a draft law on cooperation with the ICC.

As regards internal justice capabilities, the District Court of Belgrade and its War Crimes Chamber, as well as the Office of the Prosecutor for War Crimes of that Court, have proven their professional and technical ability to process the most complex cases in line with prevailing international standards of justice. Furthermore, the Belgrade District Court has expressed its readiness to contribute to the establishment of a database of the International Criminal Court that would contain all national judicial decisions and cases pertaining to the substance of international criminal law, such as crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

My country supports the further strengthening of the institutional capacity and activities of the International Criminal Court and stresses the necessity for full and unconditional cooperation by all States and international organizations. We believe that the only way to eradicate impunity is through universal acceptance of the Rome Statute and active advocacy of its aims.

Mr. Park Hee-kwon (Republic of Korea): I would like to begin by thanking the President of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Judge Philippe Kirsch, for his presentation of the Court's report (see A/62/314) to the General Assembly.

On 1 October, Japan became the 105th State party to the ICC Statute, marking an important step on the road towards universal ratification of the Rome Statute. This is a goal that the Republic of Korea strongly supports. It is our belief that there must be a seamless web of justice throughout the world.

Currently, however, there are only 13 States in Asia that are parties to the Rome Statute. My delegation is eager to see more Asian States become parties to the Statute as soon as possible. Asian States should also become partners in efforts to establish international criminal justice, which will serve the interests of regional peace and security. We hope that the Court, as well as States parties, will provide assistance to Asian States in order to enable them to prepare for accession to the Rome Statute. The Republic of Korea will do its part by engaging in outreach and advocacy efforts to encourage more Asian States to join the ICC.

My delegation is pleased to note that the ICC is now a fully functional judicial institution. The Prosecutor of the Court is continuing to investigate the situations in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Darfur, the Sudan; and judicial proceedings are taking place in each of those situations. Additionally, the Prosecutor decided to open an investigation into the situation in the Central African Republic in May of this year. As for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Court confirmed charges of war crimes against Mr. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, and his case was referred to trial.

Such progress will not only bring to justice perpetrators of heinous crimes, but it will also serve as a deterrent to future atrocities. The success of the Court will send a strong message to the international community that there will be no impunity for those who would commit crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes.

How the ICC handles these cases will be an important determinant of the Court's future and of whether it will be embraced by the entire membership of the United Nations. To ensure the best possible performance by the Court, States should provide it with the financial, logistical and political-legal support it needs to perform its work, thus enabling it to realize the rule of law and end impunity for crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes. States parties must also ensure that assessed contributions are paid in full and on time. Voluntary contributions are encouraged as an important source of revenue.

In terms of the Court's functioning, it is important to note that the ICC does not have its own enforcement arm. The Court needs the assistance and cooperation of States to apprehend indictees, collect evidence and execute its sentences. It is, thus, critically important that the Court receive the full cooperation of States, the relevant regional organizations and United

Nations operations. In this regard, my delegation commends the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for its surrender of Mr. Germain Katanga to the Court on 18 October of this year. I am also pleased to announce that the Republic of Korea has completed its domestic legal procedures for the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court and became a State party to the Agreement as of November 2005.

The Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the ICC provides many avenues for mutually beneficial cooperative efforts to establish the rule of law and end impunity. Particularly important areas of cooperation in the field are communications, transportation, logistics, and security, including the protection of victims, witnesses and investigators, and providing access to suspects and enabling the collection of evidence and documents. Each of theses areas requires the cooperation and support of the United Nations. Information-sharing between the United Nations and the Court is essential, both at Headquarters and in the field. To facilitate cooperation between the United Nations and the ICC, my delegation strongly supported the establishment of a liaison office for the Court at the United Nations in New York and supports the endowment of adequate resources for its effective functioning.

We also urge the continued participation of States in the Special Working Group on the Crime of Aggression. It is important that States actively participate in this important discussion on the definition of the crime of aggression, including the conditions under which the ICC would exercise its jurisdiction. My delegation looks forward to further progress on this issue in coming years.

My delegation welcomes the increasing trust of the international community in the independence, fairness, impartiality and effectiveness of the ICC. That trust was demonstrated when the situations in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic were referred to the Court by the States themselves in 2005. The first referral to the Court by the Security Council, of the situation in Darfur, the Sudan, is strong testimony that peace and justice, often misunderstood to be mutually exclusive, can go hand in hand.

With these positive developments in mind, the Republic of Korea once again reaffirms its unswerving commitment to support the ICC in bringing about its noble goals.

Mr. Al-Allaf (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to welcome Judge Philippe Kirsch, President of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and to thank him for the third annual report of the Court (see A/62/314) submitted to the General Assembly in accordance with the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the Court. Jordan welcomes the report, which covers the major developments in the Court's activities during the period from 1 August 2006 to 1 August 2007, and which recounts the continued interaction and cooperation between the United Nations and the Court in the service of the common objectives of these two international entities. As seen in the report, the ICC is a major pillar in promoting international justice and in the maintenance of international peace and security and in upholding the rule of law.

The work of the Court and its success in realizing its objectives depend on constructive cooperation and continued support by States and by the United Nations and its organs. In this regard, Jordan especially welcomes the cooperation provided by the United Nations to the Court, as described in the report.

Jordan emphasizes the importance of the plan of action adopted in 2006 by the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute to achieve universality and full implementation of the Statute, in view of its importance in ending impunity for perpetrators of the most heinous crimes and in ensuring full and permanent respect for criminal justice and international humanitarian law.

Jordan also emphasizes the importance of full and comprehensive preparation by States for the Rome Statute review conference scheduled for early 2010, so as to ensure that the necessary amendments are introduced and that a definition of the crime of aggression is included.

Finally, Jordan welcomes the Court's signature of the Headquarters Agreement with the host State, the Netherlands. It also welcomes the deposit by the Comoros and Chad of their instruments of ratification of the Rome Statute with the Secretary-General, and the deposit by Japan and Saint Kitts and Nevis of their instruments of accession, as well as the fact that Montenegro has informed the Secretary-General that it

had succeeded to the Statute. These events contribute to the universality of the Court.

Mr. Stemmet (South Africa): Allow me to express the appreciation of my delegation to the President of the International Criminal Court (ICC), His Excellency Judge Philippe Kirsch, for his statement in introducing the report of the International Criminal Court (see A/62/314) this morning.

The South African Government is a committed supporter of the ICC. My Government was among the first to sign the Rome Statute in 1998, and the South African parliament ratified the Statute of the International Criminal Court and adopted national legislation to enable cooperation with the Court in 2002. We see the International Criminal Court as a central element in ending impunity for international crimes and in establishing conditions under which justice can be maintained.

We commend the Court for the work it has engaged in since its inception and for the role it plays in deterring the further commission of international crimes. We take note of the cases currently before the Court and also have taken note of the decision of the Court with regard to the role of victims, in particular the measures the Court is taking to ensure wider access to victims during all stages of a trial.

We are acutely aware of the challenges facing the Prosecutor, arising primarily from the fact that the Court does not have its own police or army to effect its warrants of arrest and therefore depends entirely on the cooperation of States. This dependency of the Court upon States places a responsibility on States committed to the principle of justice to individually and collectively cooperate with the Court, be it within the context of regional organizations such as African Union and the League of Arab States or in a larger family of nations such as the United Nations.

We have taken note of the concern raised by the President of the International Criminal Court at the lack of implementation of the six arrest warrants issued by the Court, some as far back as 2005. The lack of implementation of these arrest warrants illustrates the challenges facing the system of international criminal justice, which as a system requires the Court and States to work together. The Court has played its part by issuing the arrest warrants; now it is up to States to play their part by implementing them. Our hope is that all States of goodwill that wish to put an end to impunity will cooperate with the Court by giving effect to the Court's decisions.

Mr. Hernández García (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Mexico wishes to express its gratitude to the President of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Judge Philippe Kirsch, for his introduction of the Court's third report to the General Assembly (see A/62/314) in conformity with Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the Court.

The universality of the Rome Statute is a common goal necessary to achieve the aims of international justice to which we aspired by establishing the International Criminal Court. In this regard, the Mexican Government welcomes Japan's recent accession to the Rome Statute, which raises the number of States parties to 105.

On 29 January 2004, a State party, Uganda, referred the first situation to the Court. Five months later, as a result of the second referral of a situation to the Court by a State party, the Prosecutor announced the first investigation into the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which led to the case against Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, whose trial is about to begin. We also note with interest the recent arrest of Mr. Germain Katanga. The Mexican delegation welcomes the birth of the judicial system established in the Rome Statute three and a half years ago as an important achievement, but also remains cognizant of the challenges which the Court is facing today in carrying out its mandate.

Allow me to address some of my Government's views concerning the work of the Court in the context of our wish to have a transparent, swift and efficient model of justice. In terms of transparency, the report presented today (A/62/314) reflects the complexity of the Court's work in the field, in particular as it relates to its perception by societies affected by armed conflicts, and to the persistent insecurity faced by its personnel.

For the Mexican Government, it is crucial for the Court to expand its outreach activities in a creative manner, so that it may come closer to the members of the affected communities and to reach those who are still sceptical or doubtful about the Court's work.

A fundamental part of the Court's mandate relates to the victims' rights to participate in the different

stages of the judicial process. Mexico considers that this right contained in the Statute is also a way to ensure trust and transparency, and should be supported especially. In this respect, the work of the Court is deserving of admiration.

With respect to swift justice, my Government considers that the Rome Statute contains the minimum necessary tools for the Court to meet the principle of "justice without delay". In this sense, Mexico notes that in the four situations submitted to the Court, it has taken between five and six months for investigations to begin. Likewise, we note that in the three cases in which there have been arrest warrants, namely Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan, these were issued on average one year after the referral of each corresponding case. This period of time is acceptable and consistent with the nature of the type of investigations that the Court has to undertake.

Nevertheless, we note with great concern that, with the exception of the Lubanga Dyilo case and the recent surrender of Mr. Germain Katanga, both related to the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the arrest warrants in the cases of Uganda and the Sudan have not been executed. This situation is no longer entirely within the Court's competence, and this cannot continue if we aim to achieve a judicial model by which prompt justice is offered.

It is the responsibility of States and international and regional organizations to urgently adopt the necessary measures to cooperate with the Court in its work — in this case, particularly by detaining and surrendering the alleged perpetrators of crimes. We consider that the United Nations has basic tools that can be made available to the Court. Indeed, the Relationship Agreement offers the legal basis for this cooperation. It is necessary and urgent for the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat to act within the framework of their capacities to assist the Court in discharging its mandate.

Allow me to recall what the preamble to the Statute clearly recognizes — putting an end to impunity is a necessary precondition to the preventive role created under this Statute. Without justice there is no long-lasting process of prevention, but without trials there is no opportunity to achieve justice. Mexico expresses its concern that the absence of cooperation in this respect may affect the preventive role of the Court. That is why we call upon the actors concerned not to defer their actions and to bring alleged perpetrators to justice.

In this context, my delegation is extremely worried about the fact that the situation that has prevailed for more than four years now in Darfur is still in a spiral of violence, generating one of the worst humanitarian crises of this century and exceeding the boundaries of the mandate of the International Criminal Court. In addition to more than 200,000 civilian deaths, there are also thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons. Moreover, dozens of humanitarian workers have been injured or killed, often intentionally, thereby impeding the delivery of urgent humanitarian assistance.

We strongly condemn the attacks on humanitarian workers of the United Nations and associated personnel, and we appeal for cessation of these criminal acts that are prohibited under international law.

The cooperation of the Sudanese Government is key in addressing one of the multiple facets of the complex emergency in that country, which is related to the fight against impunity and the rule of law. Those who have committed or ordered the commission of the crimes being investigated by the Court must be detained and brought to justice, regardless of their status, official position or rank. States have the obligation to ensure compliance with this objective, for today there is no room for impunity under the Rome Statute.

With respect to financial efficiency, Mexico closely follows the financial developments pertaining to the Court. We believe that the Court has an enormous responsibility towards States parties to the Statute for the good management of its financial resources under the principle of "one Court". The Court has to be a model of international administration. To that end, it can benefit from the experience of other international organizations in their efforts to be cost effective. My delegation will actively contribute to the consideration of the budget to be undertaken by the next Assembly of States Parties.

The establishment of the International Criminal Court, through the adoption of the Rome Statute in 1998, marked a turning point in the way in which international justice is conceived. It now behoves us to work together to maintain its validity and efficiency. Mexico pledges its support to the Court in its task.

Mr. Muburi-Muita (Kenya): My delegation takes the opportunity to thank Judge Philippe Kirsch, President of the International Criminal Court (ICC), for his leadership and for his comprehensive report on the activities of the Court during the past year (A/62/314). I would like to assure him of our support in the Court's quest to effectively carry out its duties.

The entry into force of the Rome Statute ushered in a new era in the administration of international criminal justice. The ICC was founded to put an end to impunity, through prevention of the most serious international crimes and the guarantee of lasting respect for the rule of law. Needless to say, this is the very basis on which the United Nations was founded more than 60 years ago. The presence of impunity not only encourages the recurrence of abuses, but also strips human rights and humanitarian law of their deterrent effect. The Court provides an enforcement mechanism for international criminal law, the legitimacy of which would be placed in jeopardy without the existence of such a mechanism.

The success of the ICC depends largely on the widespread ratification of the Rome Statute and States Parties' compliance with their obligations under the treaty. In this regard, I reiterate Kenya's commitment to render support to the work of the ICC in upholding its objectives. Kenya ratified the Rome Statute in March 2005 and is on course with the internal procedures for its domestication.

Kenya is gratified to note the progress in the Court's infrastructure and operations, as demonstrated through its growth and involvement in the referrals before it. My delegation commends the efforts of the Court in monitoring the overall situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and gathering information on the activities of armed groups in that territory. We also recognize the continued efforts to raise the level of awareness and understanding about the Court's operations globally.

It is evident that the Court's cooperative arrangements with the United Nations have been very instrumental in the success of the Court's activities in all the situations under investigation by the Court. We applaud this approach by the Court and urge strengthened and enhanced cooperation with the United Nations, as provided under the Relationship Agreement.

The movement towards the universality of the Court is clearly visible from the manner in which its establishment has been welcomed by several countries, as evidenced by the number of ratifications to the Statute and the many visits by dignitaries from States not party to the Rome treaty. The accession to the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Court on 29 January 2007 by Ukraine, which is not a State Party to the treaty, underscores the global nature and support for the ICC.

To maintain this momentum, the support of the international community remains critical. We, therefore, urge the Court to intensify its efforts to conclude negotiations on cooperative arrangements with States Parties, regional organizations and other actors in all regions, regardless of their conflict situation. This would promote and enhance the dialogue that is necessary to realize the plan of action for achieving universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute.

Given that the operations of the ICC are in harmony with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Court's work contributes to the maintenance of international peace and security. For this reason, my delegation urges States to uphold the model law they have helped establish, by enforcing arrest warrants issued by the Court. This call should transcend political considerations in order to help preserve the Court's independence and integrity.

In connection with the aforementioned, the Rome Statute affords States the opportunity to deal with cases of human rights violations under domestic law and allows the ICC to assume jurisdiction only when affected States are either unable or unwilling to act. This principle of complementarity is a positive development in the quest to promote and protect human rights.

By way of conclusion, I wish to say that respect for the law is the only guarantee of lasting peace. In this regard, Kenya supports and looks forward to the early conclusion of the deliberation on the definition and elements of the crime of aggression.

Mr. Riofrio (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to thank the President of the International Criminal Court (ICC) for having introduced the third report of the Court to this Assembly.

Allow me to begin by stating that the full operational capacity of the Court and the constant and sustained work undertaken by it in four countries, as well as its presence in 25 others, have demonstrated its suitability as well as its importance and the global nature of its work. Perhaps during the past year the presence of the Court has been more noticeable, and its work is beginning to be better understood.

The international community has witnessed an unprecedented event in history — the participation of victims in a hearing in their own right, and not as witnesses. In this sense, it is worth stressing the importance of the Court's care to provide security to victims, witnesses and their families, putting their protection ahead of its own judicial responsibilities. These measures have brought us closer to the full recognition of the individual as a subject of international law and to the need to place people at the centre of the policies and actions of States, international organizations and civil society.

Even though the Court has made progress on issues such as cooperation with States in order to facilitate preventive measures and the protection of information, it is worrisome that agreements on witness protection and relocation have not grown in proportion to the number of protected persons. Furthermore, it continues to be essential to strengthen mechanisms leading to the execution of arrest warrants and to reach agreements on carrying out sentences.

My delegation wishes to repeat its call for commitments by States to strengthen their cooperation with the Court and to find ways of making the Court more effective. In that connection, Ecuador is interested in learning of proposals relating to the specific cooperation required to ensure the strengthening of the Court.

Ecuador wishes to reaffirm its belief that the fight against impunity, for the rule of law and respect for human rights strongly contribute to strengthening international peace and security. My country has taken several measures to promote legislative reform, so as to bring about the full implementation of the Rome Statute and is currently working on a process of judicial reform that will focus in particular on criminal matters.

Ecuador is now experiencing an interesting moment of political and institutional change that will lead to the constitution of a national assembly that will reform the political Constitution of the State. A mainstay of this reform is to place individuals at the centre of the actions of the State and respect for human rights in its broadest and unrestricted sense.

The constitutional reform will allow the extension of the criminal reform under way and the finalization of a bill on crimes against humanity, which will define and categorize those crimes under the Rome Statute, as well as norms to observe the principle of complementarity and comply with obligations to cooperate with the International Criminal Court.

I wish to congratulate the Governments of Saint Kitts and Nevis and Japan for their decision to ratify the Rome Statute, as well as to commend Montenegro for having become a Party to it by succession.

It is vital to continue working for the universal adherence to the Rome Statute and its full implementation. Ecuador wishes to underscore the importance of strengthening the dialogue with all States and international organizations.

My country considers it important to continue striving to promote the Court in States that have not yet ratified the Statute, and we hope that visits will be made to States Parties that need to continue to count on the support of the international community to achieve the implementation of the Rome Statute.

Mr. Shinyo (Japan): It is my great pleasure and honour to speak today on behalf of the Government of Japan on the agenda of the International Criminal Court (ICC) at this Assembly. My delegation would like to express its appreciation to President Philippe Kirsch for his comprehensive report on the current situation of the ICC and the Court's achievements over the past year.

I am especially privileged to address the General Assembly this year, as this statement is the first intervention by the Government of Japan under this agenda item as a full-fledged State party to the Rome Statute. I would like to report to all Member States that Japan deposited its instrument of accession to the Rome Statute this year on the highly symbolic day of 17 July, the World Day for International Justice, and has become its 105th State party as of 1 October. In that connection, I would like to express our gratitude for the reference made by the delegate of Ecuador, who spoke just before me.

The internal process of ratification for Japan was not without its difficulties. President Kirsch, who visited Japan last December, had productive talks and exchanges of views with Japanese political leaders, which surely provided a timely impetus to accelerate the process of Japan's accession to the ICC.

I would like to pay high tribute to the efforts of the ICC to effectively address the four situations in Africa currently under investigation. Japan welcomes the most recent development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, that is, the second arrest and surrender of a perpetrator. I believe that the devoted work of the ICC in Africa will certainly contribute to peace and stability on the continent and thus lead to the realization of a more vibrant Africa. Japan attaches the utmost importance to the issues of Africa in its diplomacy and will be hosting the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in Yokohama next May. From this broader perspective, Japan will also continue to pay close attention to the development of the ICC's work regarding the situation in Africa.

As a new member of the ICC, Japan wishes to contribute to the maximum extent possible to the development of the Court. From the financial perspective, Japan now becomes the largest contributor to the Court, providing 22 per cent of its total budget. The Government of Japan will discharge its obligation faithfully while seeking intensively, together with the ICC and other States parties, for the most efficient ways to manage the work of the Court both in The Hague and in the field.

From the viewpoint of human resources, Japan intends to send as many highly skilled Japanese as possible to the ICC to serve as its judges and staff. Currently, the Asian region, including Japan, seems to be seriously underrepresented in the ICC. My delegation expects the Court to take all necessary measures to address this issue and hopes to see significant progress in the coming year.

Japan hopes that the Court will continue to work diligently towards the eradication of the culture of impunity and to further consolidate its status as the only permanent international criminal court in the world.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): Allow me first to thank the President of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Judge Philippe Kirsch, for the report presented to the General Assembly earlier today.

Uganda holds in high regard the work of the ICC. My delegation has full confidence in the Court. Without such confidence, Uganda could not have made referrals to the Prosecutor to commence investigations into the situation of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Uganda is determined to put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of grave crimes and we shall do everything within our power and means to bring them to account.

We note with concern the statement of the President of the Court that "a number of direct requests for cooperation have not yet been fulfilled" (*supra*). Particular emphasis was put on failure to execute the outstanding warrants.

For purposes of clarification, I would like to state that none of the indicted individuals is on Uganda's territory. Moreover, the peace talks, which are monitored by, among others, Mr. Joachim Chissano, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to LRA-affected areas, are being held outside Uganda. Therefore, it should not be understood that Uganda has control over the indictees and is refusing to hand them over for trial.

With regard to cooperation, Uganda has benefited greatly from the operations of the Court. Indeed, it is significantly due to the warrants of the Prosecutor that peace talks are taking place in Juba between the Government of Uganda and the LRA and that peace now prevails in northern Uganda. For that we are grateful, and we will continue to cooperate with the Prosecutor, indeed with the whole Court, in the furtherance of its mandate.

Further testimony of Uganda's cooperation may be observed from the fact that my Government has not withheld any evidence, including raw data, from the Office of the Prosecutor. Investigators have had free access to the witnesses, without interference from Government officials.

In his presentation earlier today, Judge Kirsch quoted from an expert report of the International Crisis Group, stating that "the ICC investigation of the Lord's Resistance Army has been crucial for promoting peace, improving security in northern Uganda and embedding international accountability standards into negotiations" (*supra*).

Uganda is proud to be associated with the work of the ICC. It is for this reason that my country was the first to offer to host the review conference due to take place in 2009.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. However, one representative has requested the exercise of his right of reply. I should like to remind Members of the General Assembly that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are to be limited to ten minutes for the first statement and five minutes for the second. Delegations are to speak from their seats.

Mr. Abdelsalam (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Some delegations made statements under this agenda item about the need of the Government of Sudan to commit itself to cooperating with the International Criminal Court (ICC), in accordance with Security Council resolution 1593 (2005). While my delegation welcomes and commends these countries for their boldness and their desire to see international justice implemented, we call upon them to possess the same courage and draw attention to the content of the aforementioned resolution and to its exemption of a Security Council member from the jurisdiction of the Court. What kind of justice are they talking about? Is it that which is happening in Darfur while it closes its unjust eyes to daily violations that are shameful and are known and witnessed by the world everyday? Justice is indivisible, and so is courage in dealing with such cases.

Resolution 1593 (2005) is shameful, not only because of this defective exception, but also because it is political in the first place and aims only at settling political accounts according to an agenda known to one and all. The Sudan is not a member of the Rome Statute that established the Court, and the Court has, therefore, no jurisdiction to try Sudanese nationals. The national Sudanese judiciary, which is independent and neutral, is capable of trying all those proven guilty.

In conclusion, we ask people to stop shedding crocodile tears and to encourage an all-inclusive peaceful settlement in the country.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has listened to the delegation of the Sudan in the exercise of its right of reply. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 76.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.

United Nations A/62/PV.44

General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

44th plenary meeting
Monday, 5 November 2007, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Third report of the General Committee (A/62/250/Add.2)

The President: I should first like to draw the attention of representatives to the third report of the General Committee, contained in document A/62/250/Add.2.

In the first paragraph of the report, the General Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that agenda item 10, "Report of the Peacebuilding Commission", be allocated to the Fifth Committee as well, for the sole purpose of considering the question of financing field missions of the Peacebuilding Commission.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: The Chairman of the Fifth Committee will be informed of the decision just taken by the General Assembly.

In paragraph 2 of the same report, the General Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that, for its sixty-second session, agenda item 65, "Report of the Human Rights Council", be allocated to the Third Committee.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Resolution 60/251 created the Human Rights Council as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. Last year, this Assembly decided to allocate this agenda item to both the plenary and the Third Committee, with the understanding that the Third Committee would take up all the recommendations of the Council to the Assembly. That decision was taken in full compliance with resolution 60/251, as the Assembly stated in the decision itself. There is no reason of substance for changing this arrangement, and we believe that the General Committee consequently should have made the same recommendation to the Assembly this year.

The discussions leading up to the recommendation on which we are about to act were not limited to the allocation of the item or the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly. Rather, they evolved around one part of the report that is of particular importance, namely, the package on institution-building. While we believe that these are separate issues, we certainly understand that things can be brought together in that way for the sake of political expediency. We would, however, expect that all aspects of such a negotiating package, as it were, would be solved together, and we note that, at this point, this is not the case. While we are about to make a decision on allocation, we do not have full clarity at this time on the circumstances under which the institution-building package will be adopted.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

07-58078 (E)

The decision on the allocation of this agenda item may appear to be merely a bureaucratic exercise. However, behind the technical question of whether the Third Committee or the plenary considers the agenda item looms the larger question of the political standing of the Human Rights Council. We hope that the issue of allocation will be taken up next year in full transparency and discussed in the manner it deserves.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor to comment on the allocation of agenda item 65, "Report of the Human Rights Council". There are important principles that risk being overlooked in this apparently straightforward proposal just put before us, namely, to have the report of the Human Rights Council allocated in this sixty-second session only to the Third Committee.

Just 18 months ago, we agreed as Member States to establish the Human Rights Council as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly. We did so in a spirit of optimism, hoping that the new body would have a higher standing and, once established, would prove more effective than the Commission in its service of promoting human rights. Last year, we decided to consider the report of the Human Rights Council in both the plenary and the Third Committee, and this decision was recorded in Addendum 2 to document A/61/252.

Over the past months, there have been a series of complicated negotiations carried out informally, which have resulted, in the end, in this proposal for the Human Rights Council report to be presented, at this session, only in the Third Committee. We consider it unfortunate that because of the different dimensions of the discussion, there has come to be some confusion between the importance, which we readily acknowledge, of a smooth adoption of the institutional package and the longer-term question of the allocation of the agenda item.

New Zealand's strong preference would have been to have had the Human Rights Council report first presented to the plenary. The approach taken last year of bringing the report to the plenary and then to the Third Committee would have served as well again this year.

While it is for each General Assembly to decided a course on the allocation of items, we take this opportunity to register that the allocation of item 65 at the sixty-third session must be carefully considered and a positive decision must be taken. Given the evolving role and importance of the Council, it will be appropriate that the report be considered first in plenary and, if the substance of the report requires it, also in the Third Committee.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland): I would like to support what my colleagues from New Zealand and Liechtenstein have just said and take the opportunity to clarify Switzerland's view on the issue.

Our position is and has been, since the creation of the Human Rights Council, that its annual report should be considered in plenary. Given the very different opinions on this issue, the General Committee last year made a recommendation that, in our view, was a valid compromise and a fair reflection of the different positions among the Members of the General Assembly.

Switzerland does not see any reason why last year's solution of double allocation had to be modified this year. There is nothing with regard to the efficiency or the practicality of last year's arrangement that, in our view, justifies a change of practice.

We are aware that a political agreement was reached between certain groups and members of the General Assembly regarding the allocation to the Third Committee for this year. Let me just restate that Switzerland was not part of those negotiations; nor is it part of the agreement reached. It is our understanding that this year's decision would not constitute a precedent for future sessions of the General Assembly.

To that end, Switzerland will continue to defend the position that the item should be allocated exclusively or at least partially to plenary in the future. It is our understanding that keeping the option open, to give human rights a more prominent role in the United Nations system, was part of the delicate political balance that led to the adoption of resolution 60/251. The allocation of the agenda item was subsequently an important step in concretizing this balance of views. We are concerned today that many who consider themselves advocates of human rights are, in our view, insufficiently defending the institutions we have created and the underpinning compromise that allows them to function.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to state very briefly that the Mexican delegation agrees entirely with the statements made by those who preceded me. We think that, in order to honour the issue of human rights and the creation of the Human Rights Council, it would have been appropriate to present the report of the Council to the plenary Assembly for subsequent consideration by the Third Committee. I think this is the wrong way to start the first months and years of the Council's existence, because in the end it is the consideration of human rights that will suffer.

At the same time, I agree entirely with the statements made by the representatives of Liechtenstein, New Zealand and Switzerland on the need for transparency in decision-making on these issues.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): As a member of the General Committee, I fully support the proposal made by the President, which was reached through informal consultations in the General Committee and was adopted by consensus, on how to deal with this particular item.

I felt obliged to take the floor to compare what has happened this time and what happened last year. Last year, we allocated this item both to the plenary General Assembly and to the Third Committee, because the Human Rights Council had not yet finished its first year, and we thought it appropriate to allow the Council to come up, this year, with a full-range report after completing a year and seven months of its existence.

My assessment and that of the delegation of Egypt is that the allocation to the Third Committee worked well. We adopted the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, both of which were considered in the Third Committee, and they did not overshadow any of the viability of the Human Rights Council.

My delegation fully supports the Human Rights Council; we are members of the Council at its current stage. We also support the institutional package. But we do not see any relationship between the allocation of the item and support for the institutional package. Anyone who would like to reopen the subject of the package can reopen it, either in the General Assembly or in the Third Committee. That is why we continue to support the position taken by the African Group, that this item should go to the Third Committee.

The President: May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The Chairman of the Third Committee will be informed of the decision just taken by the General Assembly.

Agenda item 12

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/62/296 and A/62/302)

Draft resolution (A/62/L.9)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar to introduce draft resolution A/62/L.9.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar): I have the honour to speak under agenda item 12, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". I also have the honour to inform the Assembly of the successful outcomes and substantive follow-up to the Sixth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Doha, the State of Qatar, from 29 October to 1 November 2006. I would like to express our profound appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Lynn Pascoe, and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Mr. Kemal Dervis, for their support to the New or Restored Democracies Movement.

The Sixth International Conference, held in Qatar, had two main objectives: to enhance the linkages between democracy, peace and social progress in the global development agenda; and to initiate systematic implementation and follow-up steps to consolidate the achievements and recommendations emanating from the previous important International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies. A major outcome of the Sixth International Conference was the formulation of the Doha Declaration. It addressed the concern of New or Restored Democracies Movement

member States to establish follow-up steps to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Movement.

In that regard, the Doha Declaration requested the Chair of the Sixth Conference, for a period of three years, to take the necessary measures to ensure the systematic implementation of Conference recommendations. In that connection, the Chair is assisted by an international Advisory Board on the means to follow up on Conference recommendations, which is composed of eight members: five governmental representatives, from Egypt, Uruguay, Iceland, Mongolia and Romania, nominated on the basis of geographical representation, in accordance with United Nations practice; and representatives of the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the International Civil Society Forum for Democracy.

The State of Qatar, in its capacity as Chair of the Sixth Conference, held two Advisory Board meetings under the chairmanship of His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Bin Abdullah Al-Rumaihi, Assistant Foreign Minister for Follow-up Affairs of the State of Qatar, on 26 April 2007 and 28 September 2007. The two meetings achieved significant results within a framework of consultation and cooperation. A draft Conference programme of work for 2007-2009 has been formulated. It aims at facilitating the systematic implementation of Conference recommendations. Achievable measurable activities were envisaged, such as the preparation of an electronic newsletter for the Sixth Conference; development of a Conference databank; designation of an International Day of Democracy; holding of the annual Conference high-level meeting during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly; and planning activities and expert group meetings aimed at enhancing the identity and significance of the Movement.

The International Conferences have played a prominent role in the promotion of the democratization process. The Governments, parliamentarians and civil society organizations of the Movement are determined to establish it as a source of inspiration and as a forum for exchanging experiences and good practices.

The State of Qatar, as the Chair of the Sixth Conference until 2009, pledges its commitment to ensure not only the systematic implementation of Conference recommendations but also the enhancement of international cooperation. In this connection, the Chairman of the Sixth Conference will chair the high-level meeting in New York next month.

I have the honour to present draft resolution A/62/L.9, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". Three informal consultations were recently held. The draft resolution has three objectives: first, to present information on the outcomes and concrete results of the follow-up to the Sixth International Conference, with particular focus on the systematic implementation of Conference resolutions, in accordance with the Doha Declaration; secondly, to observe the International Day of Democracy on 15 September each year; and thirdly, to underline the close cooperation between the United Nations and Governments in this regard as well as the cooperation between parliamentarians, civil society and Governments. The State of Qatar would like to convey its gratitude to all Member States that have supported this draft resolution. We look forward to its adoption by consensus.

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have joined as sponsors: Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, Iraq, Ireland, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Morocco, the Netherlands, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Yemen.

Mr. Godinho (Portugal): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union with regard to agenda item 12. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

Democracy and human rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Indeed, democracy — which we consider to be a universal value — development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are all interdependent and mutually

reinforcing. In that sense, the protection and advancement of democracy and the rule of law are among the top priorities for the international community. The European Union is firmly committed to the worldwide implementation and promotion of democratic principles.

The European Union welcomed the Sixth International Conference on New and Restored Democracies, held in Doha from 29 October to 1 November 2006, on the theme of building capacity for democracy, peace and social progress, and its outcome, the Doha Declaration. We also welcomed the historic adoption of a tripartite joint statement in a common effort to promote democracy. It is the European Union's understanding that it is fundamental and necessary to have joint action for the promotion of democracy. In that regard, we welcomed the tripartite structure of the Sixth International Conference, with parliamentarian and civil society forums held parallel to the governmental country meeting.

We welcome the decisions to improve the follow-up mechanisms between each International Conference on New or Restored Democracies, addressing the concern of member States to establish follow-up steps to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the New or Restored Democracies Movement and ensure systematic implementation of the Conference's recommendations. We would like to emphasize our appreciation for the recognition that there was a need to establish an international Advisory Board and a nucleus secretariat to assist the current Chair of the Sixth International Conference.

We also welcome the programme of work for 2007-2009, approved by the Advisory Board at its first meeting, on 26 April in Doha, particularly the decision to promote the global exchange of information and experiences by establishing and maintaining a comprehensive international databank on democracy.

We believe that further exchanges of information between the Movement and other main actors, such as the Community of Democracies, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, can only be beneficial for the promotion of democracy worldwide, as each organization has lessons learned and best practices to share. In that regard, we welcome the efforts undertaken by the Chairs of the Conference and the Community of Democracies to bring the two movements closer together, and we welcome the International Institute's intention to strengthen cooperation with the United Nations.

The importance of the support given by the United Nations mechanisms to the promotion of new and restored democracies is striking, be it through the United Nations Democracy Fund, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Department for Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Peacebuilding Support Office, or the good offices of the Secretary-General. One of the areas in which the work done by the United Nations mechanisms is more evident is in peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding activities, as peace and security also depend on the spread and consolidation of democracy, and a well-coordinated policy within the United Nations framework can help to achieve peaceful solutions to the conflicts that are threatening stability in different areas of the world.

It is also fundamental to promote conditions that will enable democracy to take root where it has never existed before and to support democratic institutions in countries in transition or that have recently moved to a democratic system.

We also regard it as utterly indispensable that men and women be given equal participation in political life and decision-making; the inclusion of everyone is a prerequisite for genuine democracy.

The European Union considers that regional cooperation is essential for promoting democracy and human rights in every area of the world. In that sense, the European Union itself can serve as a successful example of such cooperation, as democracy and fundamental freedoms are the main pillars of the European Union.

The European Union is committed to promoting democratization through its own cooperation programmes in several areas, such as the rule of law, the effective participation of people in the democratic process, the role of civil society and the development of a stable human rights culture. The European Union has increasingly been offering its assistance and cooperation in electoral processes in third countries.

We consider democratic values and human rights as essential elements of our development cooperation agreements, as clearly seen in the Cotonou Agreement

we have with several countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. That provides the basis for structured exchanges on democracy and human rights with third countries, backed up by concrete cooperation programmes and with a view to facilitating concrete progress on the ground.

Just as we value regional cooperation, we also attach the utmost importance to the efforts of the international community to devise and implement assistance and educational programmes for democracy. The European Union considers the United Nations to be the most appropriate international framework within which to work to enhance and promote democracy and human rights throughout the world.

Allow me to reiterate that we do not seek to impose any particular model of democracy. We recognize the unique political, social and cultural background of each country, and we therefore consider that civil society has an essential role to play in ensuring respect for democratic principles.

The European Union would like to conclude by thanking Qatar for hosting the Sixth International Conference in 2006 and for all the efforts it has undertaken to ensure effective implementation of the Conference's recommendations.

Mr. Chabar (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to address, on behalf of my delegation, my sincere thanks to the Secretary-General for the two reports presented under agenda item 12 (A/62/296 and A/62/302), which give us an overview of the activities and initiatives undertaken by the United Nations system to support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

I also wish to take this opportunity to thank the delegation of Qatar for the leadership and flexibility they have shown during the entire process of preparing draft resolution A/62/L.9. My delegation is pleased to be among the sponsors of the draft resolution; we agree entirely with its provisions and hope it will be adopted by consensus. The text before us today reaffirms the commitment of Member States to strengthening the important role played by the United Nations system in supporting efforts aimed at the consolidation of democracy and the promotion of human rights.

The consideration of this agenda item gives my country's delegation an opportunity to briefly highlight certain elements of the concept of democracy to which Morocco adheres and the principles and foundations of its action in the area of promoting and consolidating democracy at the national, regional and international levels. My country's view of democracy is based on four main pillars.

The first is diversity. While it is true that democracy is one of the universal values that we all share, it is equally true that there is no single path leading towards democracy, and that every country, through its creativity, the ingenuity of its people and the wealth of its heritage, can find its own path in undertaking its own democratization process. The universalization of democracy will thus only have meaning in diversity, pluralism and devotion to the values that all peoples share above and beyond their differences. Support, cooperation and exchanges for mutual enrichment that promote and consolidate democracy can only take place in a climate of mutual respect that celebrates differences, which are in themselves recognized values and legitimate rights. From that point of view, the United Nations, because of its universal and multilateral dimension and in accordance with the principles and values upon which its work is based, is the most suitable framework in which to effectively and appropriately help Member States engaged in a process of promoting and consolidating democracy.

The second pillar is peace and security. Democratic transition is a long and complex process that requires a climate of internal and external peace and stability. Lasting democracy can be established only in a regional and international context that guarantees full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. In that respect, the role of the United Nations is crucial, because of its primary responsibility to maintaining international peace and security.

Nationally, democracy can be viable only within the rule of law, in a State that guarantees the security of its citizens and their property and that — with full respect for the law, which represents the free and sovereign will of the people — fights those who might use individual and collective rights and freedoms to divert and stifle democracy. The international community should show vigilance and firmness in combating extremism — in all forms — and terrorism, a scourge which today seems to spare no region of the world.

The third pillar is development. Political democracy, which itself cannot be reduced to the mere holding of elections, however important and necessary that might be, will remain fragile and lack credibility if it is not accompanied by economic and social development that is visible to the people. In that respect, genuine democracy can occur only if it is accompanied by significant progress in reforms on good governance, which should be based on efficient administration, equitable justice and a solidarity-based economy that generates wealth, opportunity and well-being for all.

The proper functioning of democracy requires, furthermore, the upholding of public morality through efforts to fight all forms of corruption and embezzlement and the obligation to be accountable to oversight institutions that are credible and effective. In that respect, the responsibility of the international community and international development actors lies in helping developing countries in their various reform efforts.

That responsibility is too broad and noble to be reduced to mere national, regional or international programmes and initiatives that refer specifically to democracy. It must be reflected in more holistic support for all actions that could have an effect on the lives of populations. Need we emphasize, to illustrate that concept, that any initiative to increase official development assistance and deal equitably with debt strengthens democracy? Any measure aimed at the establishment of an international trade system that would be more open to developing countries' products constitutes an additional reinforcement of democratic structures. Any initiative aimed at preserving the environment and mitigating the effects of climate change also serves the cause of democracy.

The fourth pillar is respect for human rights. The consolidation of democracy depends on anchoring a culture of human rights in the minds of populations and in the political, economic and social institutions of the State and in enabling that culture to take root there. The goal is to make human beings active actors in all democratic processes, as well as their ultimate beneficiaries. In that respect, a nation that aspires to democracy should keep in mind the imperative need to promote the status of women. Women should, without discrimination or exclusion, be granted the same access as men to opportunities to participate in public life at the national, regional and international levels.

Political parties, trade unions and civil society are inarguably important actors in implementing the democratic project insofar as they assume the responsibility of enlivening public life and encourage the emergence of elites capable of managing the affairs of the people. At the same time, the media are an essential part of democratic structures. However, their contribution should not be limited to merely providing information, which is of course important, but should also include awareness-raising campaigns and the promotion of democratic values.

In summary, my country aspires to democracy with a human face. Such democracy can be lastingly established only in a world that is reconciled, peaceful, prosperous, tolerant and united.

In September 2007, Morocco organized, in accordance with established democratic norms, legislative elections that were praised around the world for their transparency, the propriety of their organization and the credibility of their outcome. Those elections led, in conformity with constitutional provisions previously agreed upon by Moroccan citizens, to the formation of a Government supported by a parliamentary majority and with a constructive opposition prepared to play its full role in providing a counterweight to and a critical review of Government action. The democratic project through which that was accomplished is based on an original model of dynamic benchmarks. That model has as its basis the rich national identity of Morocco — which in turn is derived from the authentic and tolerant values of Islam — and is inspired by a diverse multitude of international experiences in democratic participation and the promotion of human rights. That model of a constitutional, democratic and citizens' monarchy is both in perfect convergence with international commitments, which Morocco has voluntarily subscribed to with regard to the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights, and in harmonious and continuous interaction with the universal values to which my country adheres and contributes.

In order to establish this democratic and modern society, Morocco, led by the reformist vision of its young sovereign, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, and in perfect harmony with the legitimate aspirations of its citizens, opted for a comprehensive and multidimensional approach based on the triptych of reform, participation and proximity. Morocco has thus

started the new millennium with a vast range of reforms covering human rights, the status of women, the economic and financial environment, justice, delineation of the religious area, public administration, and codes of public freedom, work, investment, the press and political parties, to mention a few.

Among those wide-ranging and multifaceted reforms, my delegation wishes to mention in particular two initiatives that embody the spirit and philosophy of the democratic project that Morocco intends to achieve.

The first is the equity and reconciliation entity, which is a project in transitional justice that aims, with determination and without the least hesitation or complacency, to establish the truth concerning the abuses and violations of human rights committed in the past as well as to compensate the victims. Its mission also includes formulating recommendations and proposals to guarantee a permanent end to the abusive practices of the past. The originality of this initiative lies, inter alia, in the fact that it was the result of domestic will arising from the vitality of Moroccan civil society, the consent and effective involvement of public authorities and the broad participation of the people of Morocco, who have followed, through the media, the testimony of victims of past human rights violations.

The second initiative is a national initiative for human development, which constitutes a strategic framework for social development and the consolidation of the results achieved thus far in terms of democratic progress. It is intended to reduce the social deficits afflicting poor urban neighbourhoods and the most impoverished rural communities and to provide them with stable incomes and jobs, as well as to help the most vulnerable and those with specific needs.

The success of any project in society depends on the commitment and involvement of citizens in all its stages, from its conception and planning to its implementation and evaluation. Participatory democracy cannot be reduced to simply fulfilling one's duty to vote, however important that might be; it should be manifested by a permanent commitment by citizens in all areas of reforms and modernization. In the pursuit of that objective, Morocco has committed to developing a forum for full participation that does not exclude any of its citizens. A perfect illustration of that is the use of positive measures and actions to bridge the gaps in women's access to decision-making positions in political, economic and social areas.

The concept of proximity too constitutes an integral part of Morocco's democratic project and is increasingly becoming a citizen's right. As a result, territorial concerns are occupying an ever larger place in public policies, which must take into account the potential and the economic, social and human specificities of local communities. Therefore, the development of proximity governance based on regionalization, decentralization and administrative deconcentration is an integral part of the localized democratic structure envisaged for Morocco. The goal is to ensure that those models of complementary organization are an engine for national development while taking into account territorial dynamics.

The path to genuine democracy is strewn with pitfalls and constraints. Certainly, it leads to progress and advances, but also includes imperfections and disappointments. But that is the fate of those who have opted with determination to ensure change and have rejected resignation, defeatism and despair. Taking that reality into account, my country believes that its ambition to achieve a democratic and modern society is only exceeded by its determination tenaciously and humbly to pursue the voluntarist and modulated reforms that it is committed to undertaking, relying on its own citizens and on the confidence of its bilateral and multilateral partners.

Ms. Ochir (Mongolia): At the outset, I would like, on behalf of my Government, to congratulate the Government of the State of Qatar on having successfully convened the Sixth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies on the main theme of "Building capacity for democracy, peace and social progress" in Doha from 29 October to 1 November last year.

The Conference was a resounding success, with participants from 145 countries, 69 parliaments and 140 civil society organizations. It marked an important step in the progressive development of the global new or restored democracies process. Moreover, the significance of the Doha Conference as the first global event on democracy promotion to take place in the Middle East region cannot be underestimated. Its main theme, with a focus on the fundamental issues of peace, democracy and social progress, addressed the

universally shared aspirations of the world's people. At the same time, it also succeeded in reflecting the specific concerns and aspirations of the people of the host region of the Middle East.

It is gratifying to note that the tripartite structure of the Conference, first introduced at the Fifth Conference, which was held in my own country, was fully utilized and developed further in Doha. The adoption for the first time of a joint statement by all three components of the Conference — Governments, parliaments and civil society — reaffirming their common commitment to the process of further democratization and the importance of promoting democracy as a shared responsibility was a truly pioneering initiative to be sustained in the future.

The true merit of convening global conferences with their resultant outcome documents lies in practical actions designed to implement what we have all agreed upon and adopted at those gatherings. It is with that in mind that Mongolia undertook a number of initiatives in line with the recommendations of the Fifth Conference, which it hosted in 2003.

The substantive follow-up process in Mongolia included the development of nationally owned democratic governance indicators to measure democratic performance and democratization progress, and the country information note, another assessment tool that provides a quantitative evaluation framework for new or restored democracies. Furthermore, based on the findings of both the indicators and the information notes, a draft national plan of action to consolidate democracy in Mongolia was developed. The plan of action defined the most urgent tasks Mongolia needs to undertake in addressing the challenges to its democratic governance. In that respect, we look forward to the planned meeting of the expert group on the development of national plans on democracy, as agreed last April at Doha at the Sixth Conference Advisory Board meeting, to share and learn from the experiences of others.

Mongolia has made an intellectual commitment to tailor its democratic governance indicators specifically to the requirements of national policymakers. Our approach was to have two sets of indicators: core indicators concerned with universal attributes of democracy, and therefore relevant in all democratic societies; and satellite indicators reflecting, among other things, the specifics of the country, its nomadic civilization, its geopolitical situation, the specifics of its constitutional arrangement, the spatial distribution of the population, social profiles of our urban and rural population and gender and education aspects.

The backbone of that exercise has been the state of democracy assessment methodology developed by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). In that connection, I wish to extend our deep gratitude both to the United Nations Development Programme and International IDEA for their commitment to, and support of, our follow-up activities. My delegation would also like to strongly endorse the recommendation by the Secretary-General that future Conference hosts could use International IDEA as a continuous resource, given its extensive knowledge base. Mongolia also wishes to welcome International IDEA's plans to enhance its strategic outreach and programmatic relations with the United Nations so as to increase both the policy relevance and the impact of the work of International IDEA on democracy-building. The opening in New York of the office of the Permanent Observer for International IDEA to the United Nations was an important step in that direction.

Mongolia's follow-up experiences were shared with other countries and democracy experts at the follow-up to the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Ulaanbaatar in June 2006. Furthermore, our delegation to the Doha Conference, which was headed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Nyamaa Enkhbold, also shared its follow-up experience with the participants and presented a report on Mongolia's activities in its capacity as Chair of the Fifth Conference. We trust that our follow-up will be further sustained, and hopefully institutionalized, in the light of the new initiative to link Mongolia's achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with progress in the area of democracy, as the parliament of Mongolia has proclaimed human rights, democracy and zero-tolerance for corruption, as its ninth "MDG".

We are fully aware of the complexity of the task of identifying the quantifiable indicators to be developed for measuring progress on our MDG 9. That challenging and pioneering work is being supported by the United Nations Democracy Fund. So far, it is envisioned that the methodology and results of the democratic governance indicators will be

mainstreamed into the targets of our MDG 9. In that respect, we note with great interest the development of human rights indicators initiated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to focus on the translation of universal human rights standards into operational and contextually relevant indicators that can promote the monitoring of the implementation of those rights at the country level.

Within the framework of working towards meeting MDG 9, the Mongolian parliament passed a new law against corruption, thereby establishing a legal environment to remove the shackles that that phenomenon places on development. In addition, a new anti-corruption body was recently set up to deal with raising public awareness, the prevention and detection of corruption, the investigation of corruption cases and the auditing of financial and income statements of public officials. Mongolia also joined the United Nations Convention against Corruption and is endeavouring to implement its provisions at the national level.

We welcome the emphasis placed by Qatar, as current Chair of the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, on ensuring systematic follow-up on, and implementation of, the decisions of the Sixth Conference. The productive outcomes of the two meetings of the Advisory Board of the Conference, of which my country is honoured to be a member, have proven the usefulness of that mechanism. I would like specifically to highlight the importance of developing and maintaining the new democracy databank to facilitate the exchange of experiences and expertise among States with regard to their democratization efforts.

An important principle underlying our movement is that, while democracy cannot be imported from abroad, it has to be encouraged and supported by the international community through cooperation and assistance. As seen in the Secretary-General's report (A/62/296) on the agenda item before us, the United Nations system has been undertaking multifaceted activities in support of democracy around the globe. My delegation is also heartened by the personal commitment of the Secretary-General to the promotion of democracy as one of the priorities of his term in office.

My delegation wishes to welcome in particular the information provided in the report on the work of major intergovernmental movements and organizations in the area of promoting democracy and on how the United Nations system has worked, and could work further, with them in a mutually supportive way. It would be advisable to have a study on inter-agency coordination and coherence of efforts to promote democracy undertaken by the United Nations system. In our view, such a study should provide concrete proposals and recommendations on streamlining and lending more coherence to actions by different United Nations stakeholders in the promotion of democracy.

I agree with the suggestion made by the Secretary-General that the United Nations system should provide technical support in the establishment of the democracy databank and its website. In that regard, I should like to go even further and propose that a comprehensive United Nations Web portal — perhaps with the address *democracy.un.org* — could be set up, incorporating data on activities related to the promotion of democracy undertaken by the United Nations system, as well as the relevant work done within the framework of the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies and the Community of Democracies.

Mongolia has long worked proactively in order to bring closer together the Community of Democracies and the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies as two global intergovernmental movements sharing the same goal of promoting and consolidating democracy. A few years ago, my delegation developed a non-paper on possible ways to bring the two movements closer together, and shared it among their membership. As a member of both the Advisory Board of the Conference and the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies, Mongolia stands ready to continue such efforts in cooperation with other interested members.

In conclusion, may I reiterate my delegation's strong support for the draft resolution entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies", which is contained in document A/62/L.9, and to appeal to the wider membership of the United Nations to make concerted efforts in its follow-up.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of Mexico welcomes the introduction of draft resolution A/62/L.9, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies", including the proposal to designate an International Day of Democracy.

Mexico is also pleased to welcome the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" (A/62/296), which accurately reflects the work done by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) to promote democracy throughout the world. In that regard, we welcome and support the Secretary-General's recommendation with regard to cooperation between IDEA and the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, the Community of Democracies and the United Nations.

As a member State of IDEA, Mexico has committed itself to develop a broad range of activities to promote democracy at the national and international levels. My Government's cooperation with IDEA has resulted in Project Mexico, which was launched in 2005 to implement and follow-up, among other things, a series of activities, conferences, seminars and publications intended to increase dialogue and education about democracy, as well as to promote and strengthen it.

In that regard, I should like to refer to the visit to Mexico made last October by the Secretary-General of IDEA, during which he met with Mexico's President and with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Governance Secretariat, the Electoral Court of the Judicial Branch and the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico. On that same occasion, the IDEA Secretary-General also paid a visit to the Legal Research Institute of the National Autonomous University of Mexico and met with members of the Chamber of Senators. His visit was a reflection of how Mexico and IDEA are resolutely working together.

IDEA makes a contribution to the international community by providing access to its extensive knowledge base, consisting of specialized capacity-building tools and networks of experts in electoral processes, political parties, constitution drafting, gender and democracy, and democracy assessment methodology based on local conditions and democratic dialogue.

We are confident that, thanks to the recent opening in New York of the office of the Permanent Observer of IDEA to the United Nations, the organization will enhance its strategic outreach and programmatic relations with the United Nations and be able to liaise with Member States in carrying out its work in the consolidation of democracy.

Mr. Gehlot (India) (*spoke in Hindi; English text provided by the delegation*): We thank the Secretary-General for his reports submitted under agenda item 12, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" (A/62/296 and A/62/302).

The United Nations has long supported nascent democracies in the conduct of elections and promoted transparent and accountable governance. It has also assisted countries emerging from conflict and political upheaval to build democratic institutions. We welcome the increasing role of the United Nations in facilitating international cooperation within the framework of the follow-up to the fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, particularly in providing democracy assistance or advice.

India is honoured to be a regular participant at the International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies. It is important to share experiences on democratization and to identify means by which to promote pluralistic and participatory democracy. We note with satisfaction that participation in the International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies has grown from 13 countries, at the first conference, in Manila in 1988, to 142 countries, at Doha, in 2006.

Democracy is a powerful ideal, but its successful exercise requires strong and enduring institutions, laws and procedures and the development of a parliamentary culture, whose essence is the accountability of those in authority to the ordinary citizens of the country. An independent and impartial judiciary, a free press, professional civil and military establishments, constitutionally empowered institutions to safeguard the rights of all sections of society and an independent electoral mechanism are some of the more important elements of democracy.

India's democratic heritage is rooted in its cultural ethos of tolerance, respect for different viewpoints and a ready embrace of diversity. India has demonstrated that stable long-term growth can be successfully realized alongside a thriving democracy. Indeed, the Indian experience shows that the implementation of proactive development policies and economic reforms, when coupled with a liberal democratic polity, leads to overall stability and growth and significant poverty reduction.

India has been sharing its rich experience, institutional capabilities and training infrastructure with nations that have sought its assistance. In the same spirit, India has also been supportive of United Nations efforts to build the institutional and human capabilities that are necessary to underpin the successful exercise of democracy. As the world's largest democracy, it was also natural for India to support the establishment of the United Nations Democracy Fund. We made an initial contribution of $10 million to the Fund, and remain actively and constructively involved in achieving the objectives for which it was set up. India recently announced a further pledge of $10 million to the Democracy Fund. It also stands ready to share its experiences and to cooperate with other countries under the auspices of the Democracy Fund, including in areas such as institution building, awareness creation and leadership development.

We have noted the Secretary-General's concrete recommendations on how to improve cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and other relevant movements and organizations concerned with the promotion of democracy. Apart from the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, the United Nations is expanding its interaction with other intergovernmental organizations working in the democracy field, including the Community of Democracies and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The suggestion that the United Nations could assist in creating mechanisms for coordination and cooperation among these global democracy movements needs to be carefully considered. Perhaps United Nations efforts should instead focus on institution- and capacity-building among interested Member States.

Our collective efforts should focus on improving the capacity of Member States so that they can embrace the rule of law and democracy. The aim should be to continue to strengthen democracy where it is new or restored, and to encourage its restoration where the transition to democracy has been derailed. As the world's largest democracy, India is ready to join the efforts of Member States to strengthen the activities of the United Nations to uphold and cherish democratic values.

Mr. Malmierca Diaz (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): One of the important tenets that we all agreed upon in the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993 was that

> "Democracy is based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives."

We are very pleased that this principle received great recognition again in the Doha Declaration, adopted by the Sixth Conference of New or Restored Democracies.

However, it is a matter of concern that there is an increasing attempt at the international level to establish a single pattern of democracy and governance, based on unjust canons of the so-called liberal democracy and completely disregarding the particularities and realities of each country and society. It is clear that the most powerful countries continue to promote along with that model a new instrument to dominate the peoples and subjugate their identities. Today, just like in the darkest times in human history, they purport to condemn and punish all those who will not bow to the new dogma.

In demanding priority compliance with those tenets, which are basically restricted to the sphere of civil and political rights, the concept that democracy is first and foremost government of the people, by the people and for the people has been pushed into the background. The intent is to dodge the fact that democracy is real and daily participation in the exercise of power and decision-making in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres.

There cannot be democracy without freedom, without popular participation, without social justice, without individual and collective well-being, without human solidarity. Sovereignty is vested in the people, and without national independence there is no sovereignty. Nor is there democracy without development. Democracy cannot be restricted to the

exercise of civil and political rights to the detriment of economic and social rights.

A genuine democracy should not institutionalize the defence of the wealthiest and most privileged to the detriment of those who are most in need. In this regard, it is worth emphasizing that the countries that most advocate the concepts of political freedoms and rights do nothing, or very little, to prevent the death from starvation and curable diseases of millions of people in the Third World, to educate 115 million school-age children who do not go to school and more than 800 million adult illiterates, to help more than 1.1 billion people escape extreme poverty and to shelter the millions left forsaken.

The so-called liberal bourgeois democracy, which would seem to have worked with serious limitations in the Western countries, has proved ineffective in other contexts.

It is also worth pointing out that throughout the world, even in well-developed societies, there are quite a few cases where political parties abound and yet there is no democracy and no popular participation, where abstention is the main voter and non-participation in socio-political life is the rule, bringing about Governments without the support of the majority and the people's real consensus. In that model, patronage, authoritarianism, vote-buying, electoral fraud, corruption, embezzlement and favouritism, among other ills, have spread.

Within the industrialized and wealthy world, there are many citizens who question the model of liberal democracy that some attempt to impose. They feel they have no real participation in the decision-making processes, they feel manipulated by campaigns and the media, that the model is elitist and that political parties and politicians lack prestige and do not keep their electoral promises.

We are also concerned at the growing limitations being imposed on the exercise of the most fundamental civil and political rights in a large group of First World countries under the pretext of the fight against terrorism. Legal provisions have even been enacted authorizing long-term detention without access to lawyers and without charges, substitution of the extradition procedures by transfer of citizens from one country to another with simple arrest guarantees, extrajudicial executions, assassination of foreign citizens and concealed actions in other countries, breaching laws and borders.

Today it is impossible to provide convincing arguments for the hypothesis of the universal superiority of the liberal bourgeois democracy, yet there continues to be a determination to impose it.

In contrast to that homogenizing trend is the work of the movement of the so-called new or restored democracies, whose main success is its increasingly inclusive character, which marks a very important difference to other processes of doubtful origin and clearly selective and excluding character. That movement does not recognize as valid the dogma that others are trying to impose and considers that there is not only one vision of democracy. On the contrary, to a large extent it has been a meeting place for discussion and reflection on this important issue. To this recognition of the freedom of all countries to choose their own path to democracy is added its call to address economic and social development for the advancement of democracy. That movement can be an opportunity to exchange views and support many peoples' efforts to consolidate their democratic systems if it follows the path of guaranteeing broad participation and plurality of opinions and if it preserves, as it has endorsed, the unrestricted respect of the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Therefore we congratulate the Government of Qatar for organizing the Sixth Conference of New or Restored Democracies and for its effort to ensure the broadest participation. Qatar was able to organize a plural, inclusive and participative meeting. The proof of this is the unprecedented participation of more than 145 States. It contrasts with other forums and movements that promote limited participation requirements and that have very narrow viewpoints on democracy, basically prioritizing a liberal-bourgeois angle with a clearly selective and manipulative approach. The so-called Community of Democracies is the best example of this.

Cuba believes that the paradigms of selectivity, manipulation and politicization seeking to establish that group of democracies clash with the guidelines established in the Charter of the United Nations and have a clear goal of exclusion. We are thus concerned at the recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General in document A/62/296 calling for a better relationship between the United Nations and the

Community of Democracies and complementary activity between this movement and the New or Restored Democracies Movement.

Exclusion, selectivity and the imposition of single approaches to democracy contradict not only the spirit and the letter of the Charter of the United Nations, but also the definitions set out in other important documents of the Organization, including those adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna. If we really seek to assist the efforts of many peoples to consolidate their democratic systems, there is no more urgent and important task than to democratize international relations.

Cuba believes that the very essence of democracy is the power of the people, which includes the exercise of power and decision-making both in the political arena and in the economic, social and cultural areas. Cuba takes pride in its deeply popular and participatory democracy — a system in which there are no electoral parties as political intermediaries, the people exercise power, and individual and collective well-being and human solidarity are fundamental. In my country, political institutionization was established on the basis of the broadest possible popular participation and control. Our own experience is the result of our history.

In Cuba, all citizens 16 and older have the right to vote and thus to elect and be elected. Candidates are nominated directly by the voters in public assemblies, rather than through political parties. There are no discriminatory, million-dollar, defamatory and manipulated electoral campaigns. There is total honesty and transparency in elections, including in the public tallying of votes, with possible participation by national and foreign media, diplomats, tourists and whoever else wishes to do so. All those elected must be elected by a majority. Voting is free, equal and secret. All representative organs of the power of the State are elected and renewable. All those elected are held accountable for their actions and can be recalled at any time. Deputies and delegates are not paid a salary. Historically, no fewer than 95 per cent of voters have participated in elections.

We need a more democratic and tolerant world. Why does a small group of rich and powerful countries want to impose an increasingly less democratic and less pluralistic world? Why not struggle for more tolerance, not only within countries, but in the relations among them? Why not accept the existence of diverse models of civil and political order? By what right does one try to proclaim a single model of democracy, when we proclaim that all peoples have the right to self-determination and to freely choose their political status? Democracy has its limitations, problems and challenges in one form or another, both in the North and in the South.

Mr. Bista (Nepal): Democracy, the rule of law and human rights are among the founding ideals of the United Nations. Democracy greatly helps the United Nations in achieving its ideals, such as the establishment of international peace and security. The universalization of democracy would also release resources being used for current endeavours aimed at peace and security for much-needed socio-economic development around the world.

We attach great importance to the role of the United Nations system in assisting new and restored democracies. We welcome the establishment of the United Nations Democracy Fund to strengthen democracy. The Fund should provide additional technical and financial assistance to countries in democratic transition.

We welcome the Ulaanbaatar and Doha Declarations and their respective plans of action, and we stress their effective implementation. Promoting and protecting democracy are shared responsibilities. Therefore, the development of the tripartite mechanism comprising Governments, parliaments and civil society during the Sixth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies is a welcome development.

Something special is at stake in the consolidation of new and restored democracies. An investment in the strengthening of democracy in such countries is like an investment in peace and prosperity throughout the world. Therefore, we urge partner countries to generously support new and restored democracies in strengthening their democratic institutions and processes.

The people of Nepal have had to fight for democracy time and again, most recently in April 2006, since Nepal's earlier experiences with democracy, in the 1950s and the 1990s, were short-lived. The people of Nepal achieved democracy despite the odds of a violent conflict and an absolute monarchy. That peaceful movement led to the return of democracy and the beginning of the end of a decade-long conflict. With the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement

in November 2006, the erstwhile rebels joined an interim parliament created through an interim constitution, which upholds democratic norms, values and principles and guarantees civil liberties and fundamental freedoms.

Although the postponement of the elections for the Constituent Assembly was disappointing to everyone, the parties are currently engaged in serious dialogue, including through recent deliberations in the parliament, to resolve all political differences with a view to fixing dates for those elections as soon as possible. We are confident that all differences will be resolved through dialogue, accommodation and understanding and that democracy — which we in Nepal call *Lokatantra* — will continue to prosper in Nepal.

Mr. Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Thus far we have been able to resolve all differences in the resolution of conflict and in making the transition to democracy in Nepal, through peaceful dialogue and democratic principles. It has been through dialogue that the interests of traditionally marginalized groups, such as the Madhesis and various ethnic and indigenous peoples, have been accommodated with a view to their meaningful participation in the political process.

We appreciate the role of the United Nations Mission in Nepal in assisting Nepal's peace process, especially by monitoring weapons and armed personnel and by assisting with the elections, as requested by Nepal. We offer our sincere thanks to Nepal's friends in the international community for their exemplary spirit of goodwill and cooperation in helping Nepal to achieve peace and consolidate democracy. I would like to urge continued support through the provision of technical and financial assistance for socio-economic development and reconstruction, which will be equally important in sustaining Nepal's hard-won democracy.

In conclusion, I pledge Nepal's commitment to work with new and restored democracies, the United Nations system and our partner countries in strengthening and consolidating democracy in Nepal and elsewhere. As a country that paid a very high price for the restoration of democracy, Nepal is committed to protect, promote and institutionalize democracy and its ideals.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/32 of 19 November 2002, I now call on the observer for the Inter- Parliamentary Union.

Mrs. Filip (Inter-Parliamentary Union): It gives me great pleasure to address the General Assembly on the occasion of this debate on support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

At the outset, I wish to commend the efforts of the State of Qatar to ensure systematic follow-up to the recommendations made at the Sixth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies. As the Assembly is aware, the tripartite format of that Conference, like the previous one held in Mongolia in 2003, allowed for fruitful interaction between Governments, parliaments and civil society, with a view to an integrated and all-encompassing approach to democracy promotion worldwide.

At the Conference, members of parliaments undertook to work for a more effective contribution of their parliaments to democracy around the world. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is pleased to be part of that process. We remain committed to following up on the Doha Declaration, including its parliamentary component. We will continue to mobilize the global parliamentary community in support of democracy at both the national and international levels.

As we embark on this debate, let me also express the IPU's support for the draft resolution (A/62/L.9) that is before the General Assembly today. We are pleased to note the important place it gives to parliaments as key instruments of democracy. It is also gratifying to see that it calls for the institution of an International Day of Democracy. Let me assure the Assembly that, in turn, the IPU will be calling upon its member parliaments to celebrate the Day accordingly. Indeed, we are convinced that such a Day will help to forge a global alliance in favour of the guiding principles of democracy and provide added momentum for democracy-related activities.

Let me now offer a few thoughts that I hope will not only enrich the debate but will also help us, notably within the United Nations system, to devise strategies whereby we can deliver more effectively in the field of democracy.

In that regard, I would like to stress the necessary linkage between peace and democracy. The United Nations, as the foremost international body dedicated to the promotion of peace, has an interest in pursuing and realizing the goals of democracy as a means of establishing a durable basis for peace.

When we talk of peace, we are also looking at the prevention of conflict. The IPU would like to see more consistent efforts being deployed in the area of post-conflict institution building. Peace can only be fully realized when State institutions are properly empowered and resourced to contribute to the rule of law and good governance. We are particularly heartened by ongoing work deployed by the new Peacebuilding Commission in support of post-conflict societies in Burundi, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Needless to say, we look forward to the expansion of those efforts to other areas affected by conflict.

I also wish to emphasize the link between democracy, poverty eradication and social justice. Democracy in itself would be worthless if it did not lead to the betterment of the lives of people for whom it is meant. Conversely, it is hard for the poor to become active politically when they have more pressing concerns to attend to. Freedom from want should therefore underpin efforts to enhance democracy. That includes devising policies that are intended to improve on the well-being of all in society and enhanced efforts toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals, for which the IPU is increasingly mobilizing support in the parliamentary community.

As we reflect on how to foster democracy worldwide, especially in those regions where democracy is still fragile, we should acknowledge and address some of the fundamental challenges facing democracy today. We know some of the downsides of globalization. We are aware of the emergence of terrorism as a major scourge and threat. We are conversant with the effects of rampant corruption on democratic processes in many countries. And we know all too well the reasons why only 17 per cent of women worldwide occupy elected office. Those are all obstacles that we need to overcome as we seek to build robust democracies.

Furthermore, we are witnessing public disillusionment with democracy — as evidenced, among other things, by low turnout in elections around the world and the continuing decline in public regard for governing institutions. It seems to us that the United Nations should devote more efforts in the coming years to analysing that phenomenon and trying to reverse the trend. More effort needs to go into building stronger and more effective public institutions, notably those that are responsible for organizing elections in new democracies. The credibility of those institutions rests on their ability to organize elections whose outcomes are above reproach and accepted by all.

Going beyond the representational aspects of democracy, the international community must also work harder to build the capacities of people to participate in the political process between elections.

As the world organization of parliaments, the IPU will continue to work with parliaments, with a view to rendering them more representative, more transparent, more accessible, more accountable and more effective. The IPU will also continue to defend the rights of those many members of parliaments around the world who are prevented from doing the job they were elected to do, freely, safely and effectively. And we will seek to promote parliaments as prime movers of national reconciliation in post-conflict societies.

The IPU will therefore continue its efforts to build capacity within parliaments, promote the political participation of women, defend and promote human rights and also contribute to the setting of internationally accepted standards in the field of democracy. In building strong institutions, we should seek to harness the enormous potential offered by the new information and communications technologies to streamline processes, but also to improve on service delivery.

Let me conclude by drawing the Assembly's attention to the Universal Declaration on Democracy, which was adopted by consensus on the occasion of the ninety-eighth session of the General Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Cairo, Egypt, in September 1997, and whose tenth anniversary the IPU celebrated very recently. We believe that it is meaningful that the International Day of Democracy has been chosen to coincide with the anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Democracy. The precepts and principles enshrined in that important political document are as valid today as ever before. We invite the United Nations and its Member States to more

systematically integrate those core principles into their efforts to strengthen democracy.

In conclusion, the IPU is committed to working closely with the United Nations to promote a culture of democracy worldwide.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 58/83, of 9 December 2003, I now call on the observer for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance to make a statement.

Mr. Tommasoli (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance): I would like to thank the General Assembly very much for giving me this opportunity to address it today during this debate on a matter that is very close to the mandate of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). I also wish to thank the Government of Qatar, the host of the Sixth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, for its continued commitment to the new or restored democracies process and its invaluable contribution to the success of the Doha Conference and its follow-up.

International IDEA welcomes the establishment of the Conference's international Advisory Board, at whose meetings we have had the honour to participate as an observer. We believe that its programme of work for the period 2007 to 2009 will help to ensure continuity between Conferences.

We think that the new or restored democracies process will further enhance its effectiveness by addressing two issues, the first being the need to move beyond conferences and to link them to actual democracy-building efforts on the ground. In that respect, we welcome Mongolia's example, which sets the best practice for those countries interested in engaging in self-assessment of the state of their democracies.

The second issue is the need for the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies process to make better use of concrete experience-sharing, including from a South-South perspective, on the challenges and successes of democratic reform processes. International IDEA will be pleased to provide inputs through more operational and targeted ways of organizing future Conferences, in line with the Ulaanbaatar Declaration and Plan of Action and the Doha Declaration and Plan of Action.

International IDEA welcomes the conclusions and recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report (A/62/296) on support by the United System of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies, including on the need to facilitate greater coordination in the relationships between the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies and the Community of Democracies. More broadly, if we set the new and restored democracies process within the context of the current democracy-building landscape, we have to consider the role of the United Nations. Democracy is strongly linked to the three pillars of the United Nations mandate — peace and security, human rights, and development. Democracy as a process of expanding political choice plays a critical role in both achieving each of these goals and reinforcing their interlinkages. There is an increasing awareness that some fundamental objectives of United Nations work cannot be achieved without addressing the issue of democracy.

We stress the need for the United Nations to take leadership, based on its convening power, in regaining multilateral credibility for democracy-building assistance. At least three dimensions are critically important in this perspective. The first is the capacity to take account of the fundamentally political nature of those processes addressed through various United Nations mechanisms and funds, such as the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations Democracy Fund. This requires careful consideration of the widening range of actors and stakeholders engaged in democracy-building. Alongside the involvement of more traditional actors, such as legislatures, civil society and the media, other types of actors, for example, political parties, play a critical role in democratization, including in post-conflict situations. Additionally, the work on and with political parties has actually emerged as one of the most challenging areas in the democracy-building arena over the last years.

The second dimension is greater consistency and integration across the board, which would enhance the effectiveness and impact of the expanded volume of initiatives carried out in different democracy-building sectors and thematic areas by the United Nations system. This would lead to supporting policies that are

long term and comprehensive and which respond to a home-grown demand.

The last dimension is a coherent and non-prescriptive approach to democracy-building based on the consideration of its links to the three pillars of United Nations action and informed by the wealth of recent experiences in a large number of countries, not least in the global South. This approach could promote more diversified views on democracy and how to develop and sustain it.

We welcome the establishment of the International Day of Democracy and we stand committed to working with the United Nations and other partners, within the framework of our regional and country programmes, to plan for this day so that its celebration can effectively contribute to building democracy on the ground.

In conclusion, we confirm International IDEA's availability in further expanding and consolidating the strategic partnership with the United Nations, based on its observer status at the General Assembly.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. I should like to inform members that in order to allow time for the review of the programme, budget implications of draft resolution A/62/L.9, action on the text will be taken at a later date, to be announced.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 12.

Agenda item 19

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/345)

Draft resolution (A/62/L.7)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Germany, who will introduce draft resolution A/62/L.7.

Mr. Matussek (Germany): I have the honour to introduce today draft resolution 4/62/L.7, on the situation in Afghanistan. This draft resolution is the result of several weeks of consultations in the Assembly and I would like to thank all delegations involved for their input, patience and spirit of cooperation. This draft resolution also reflects the support of the General Assembly for the Afghanistan Compact. The large number of sponsors demonstrates, once again, the broad support of the Assembly on this issue.

Allow me to share a few thoughts with Members. The United Nations has played the key role in coordinating efforts for institution-building and reconstruction within the framework of the Afghanistan Compact and must continue to do so. In March 2007, the Security Council reinforced certain dimensions of the engagement of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan's (UNAMA), including new responsibilities, such as the promotion of a more coherent international engagement, monitoring of the protection of civilians and developing synergies with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

UNAMA has laid the groundwork for the integrated civil-military approach within Afghanistan. In addition, it has managed to complete its expansion throughout Afghanistan in spite of security risks. The number of field offices — 17 by now — has doubled within less than a year. We therefore commend UNAMA, led by Tom Koenigs, for its outstanding and dedicated work under often difficult circumstances. We all need to support UNAMA and to provide it with the necessary resources for its future work.

We certainly continue to face serious challenges in Afghanistan. The security situation has become more difficult since 2006, especially – but not only – in the southern and eastern parts of the country. Poppy cultivation has again increased — this year by 17 per cent — despite the immense efforts and resources the international community is investing to support the Afghan Government in the fight against the narcotics industry. This increase is linked to the insurgency in the south and east of Afghanistan.

We have not yet reached a level of governance that permits delivering efficient services to citizens throughout the country. We therefore welcome the measures taken by the Afghan Government to improve governance at all levels and to fight corruption wherever it occurs. We strongly encourage our Afghan friends to vigorously support its efforts. Afghan ownership is a key issue in this regard.

Having said this, we should also recognize the great achievements of the past months: 6.5 million children — among them 2 million girls — are again receiving school education. A great part of the infrastructure has been rebuilt. The economy as a

whole and foreign trade, especially, is growing. We note that regional economic cooperation, as well as regional political initiatives, are moving well ahead.

Germany welcomes all initiatives that aim at reinforcing regional cooperation and calls upon regional and international partners to make these initiatives a success. We welcome the fact that the Afghanistan-Pakistan peace jirga held in August in Kabul has turned out to be an important confidence-building measure between the two countries and the communities on either side of the border.

The Afghanistan Compact also provides the foundation for Germany's engagement. In September 2007, the German Government updated and adjusted its policy guidelines with regard to Afghanistan. On October 12, 2007, the German Parliament approved the extension of the mandate. On 12 October 2007, the German Parliament approved the extension of the mandate of our military contingent to the ISAF for another year, with a ceiling of 3,500 soldiers. Germany has been among the main contributors to Afghan security and reconstruction since 2001, with 3,200 of our soldiers serving in Afghanistan and more than $700 million in civilian aid already disbursed. This year, we increased our yearly commitment to more than $130 million. Another increase, to more than $160 million, is foreseen for 2008, with a growing share disbursed through the Afghan budget. We acknowledge the growing capacity of the Afghan authorities to effectively implement reconstruction projects.

Besides the civilian reconstruction process, a major priority for Germany is the strengthening of the Afghan national security forces. The National Police and the National Army have made significant progress and are bearing a growing share of responsibility, together with the international forces, in establishing security and combating the terrorist threat.

But they still lack resources, equipment, training, and mentoring, and are not yet, to quote the benchmark of the Afghanistan Compact, "able to meet the security needs of the country effectively". Therefore, Germany, as a key partner in police reform, has promoted a European police mission, EUPOL, which started on 15 June 2007 and will reach full operational capacity by early next year. Building upon what we have already achieved nationally with the support of many partners, EUPOL will substantially increase the number of trainers and mentors for the police and cover most Afghan provinces, thereby making a crucial difference to achieving a strong and effective national police. We ask all partners to continue to support this effort wholeheartedly. In addition, we shall substantially increase our national contribution to the training of the Afghan National Army.

During Germany's presidency of the Group of Eight (G8) this year, we launched a G8 initiative to foster dialogue and cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which will be continued. We hosted a meeting of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board at the senior political level in Berlin to strengthen coordination within the Afghanistan Compact framework at a political level.

With regard to the political calendar, the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2009 and 2010 will present opportunities as well as challenges for Afghanistan. Germany is committed to supporting Afghanistan in preparing the conditions for an electoral system that is both effective and viable. The work of the Independent Election Commission will be very important. The German Government will continue to assist Afghanistan and, to name only one concrete area of action, intends to provide assistance for the training of election officers.

Experience shows that reconstruction after a civil war is not a matter of quick fixes. This is even more so in Afghanistan, where two decades of a devastating war, civil war and the Taliban regime left no effective State structures to build upon. Real reconstruction is a long-haul effort. And it requires a long-term commitment from the Afghan Government and people and the international community. The United Nations successfully took on a key role at the Petersburg Conference in 2001, and it will continue to coordinate international commitment on the ground. Germany is committed to supporting the United Nations and to helping for as long as it will take to reach our common goal of a stable, peaceful, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan. German Federal Chancellor Merkel, who visited Afghanistan this past weekend, reiterated this commitment.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan): It is a great pleasure for me to address this Assembly, as we gather to consider the annual draft resolution of the General Assembly on the situation in Afghanistan.

Today's meeting, following the high-level meeting on 23 September co-chaired by President Karzai and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Security Council meeting on 15 October, is a clear indication of the ongoing commitment and support of the United Nations and the international community to ensure Afghanistan's successful transition from war and conflict to peace and stability.

We are pleased that Afghanistan continues to be on the agenda of the General Assembly. Today's gathering reaffirms that Afghanistan remains among the top priorities of the United Nations. It also indicates unwavering international support for efforts to consolidate the gains of the past six years towards the goal of a stable, moderate and prosperous Afghanistan.

As we speak, Afghanistan continues to make substantial progress in various areas, including institution-building, economic growth, education, health, road-building and rural development.

In the area of security, we have increased the size and strength of our National Army and National Police, enabling our security forces to play a more effective role in combat operations in various parts of Afghanistan. The Afghan National Army, which will stand at 47,000 strong by the end of the year, is on track to meet the target strength of 72,000 by 2009. Additional progress is evident in the disbanding of illegal armed groups throughout the country.

Steady progress continues in improving the socio-economic conditions of our people. At least 85 per cent of the population has access to basic health service. We have built 4,000 hospitals and clinics throughout the country. Increased access to health centres has saved the lives of 89,000 children and reduced maternal mortality by 40,000 this year. More than six million students are attending schools and universities, of which girls comprise 36 per cent. The National Solidarity Programme, as the largest effort to empower and develop rural areas, has brought development projects to over 18,000 communities throughout the country, touching the lives of 13 million villagers.

Afghanistan has taken important steps towards regaining its historic role as a facilitator of regional economic cooperation. This comes after years of economic isolation, resulting from years of armed conflict and foreign occupation. Among other infrastructure projects completed, our national highway system — stretching 6,000 kilometres — will lead to increased trade with our neighbours.

Afghanistan's inclusion in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in May of this year was a milestone development for our integration into regional markets. Most recently, we hosted the seventeenth annual meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization in the historic city of Herat with the purpose of maximizing Afghanistan's potential to promote trade and development in the region.

The consolidation of our democratic institutions has enabled our citizens to enjoy more social, political and economic rights than ever before. The unprecedented number of women represented in our National Assembly, and the presence of tens of political parties and numerous media outlets is clear testimony to this assessment. Hundreds of varied periodicals, television and radio stations throughout the country are making Afghanistan one of the most liberal environments for independent media in the region.

The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission continues to undertake important measures to protect and promote human rights for all citizens. In this regard, I am pleased to state that, among other initiatives, progress continues towards the implementation of the Action Plan on Peace, Reconciliation and Justice.

Despite remarkable achievements, we have not lost sight of the numerous challenges. Terrorism, illicit drugs, weak State institutions, poverty and socio-economic hardship, as well as problems associated with the situation in the region, are among our main challenges. These are interdependent threats with domestic, regional and international dimensions.

Terrorism remains the primary threat to security and efforts to consolidate peace and stability in Afghanistan. This year, there has been a rise in violent terrorist activities by the Taliban and Al-Qaida in Afghanistan and the region. Terrorists are spreading fear and intimidation both inside and outside of Afghanistan. They rely on heinous and brutal acts aimed at undermining the security of our people and deterring the commitment of the international community to Afghanistan. That is why they have increased terrorist attacks in the form of abductions, intimidation, suicide bombings and use of sophisticated explosive devices, targeting and terrorizing a wide

spectrum of society, including children attending school, religious clerics, international aid workers, journalists and Afghan and international security forces.

Substantial progress continues towards defeating terrorism and extremism. Recent military operations have weakened the command and control structure of terrorist networks by capturing or eliminating an increasing number of high- and middle-level Taliban commanders who were responsible for organizing and carrying out numerous suicide bombings in various provinces. Our counter-terrorism efforts also include strengthening the international sanctions regime against terrorists.

Sustained success in the military campaign against terrorists is dependent on the level of technical and logistical assistance to bolster the capacity of our security institutions. A strong and professional national army and police are a precondition for long-term stability and security in Afghanistan. We call for increased efforts to accelerate the training of our security forces so that they can become self-reliant and assume an independent role in addressing the security needs of our people.

Military means alone are not the sole solution to Afghanistan's security problems. An integrated military, political and development strategy is necessary for the substantial and sustainable improvement of security in Afghanistan. As a complement to military action, we continue to increase efforts for political outreach to non-terrorist Taliban, those who are willing to renounce violence and abide by the provisions of Afghanistan's constitution.

Implementing development and infrastructure projects, particularly in areas threatened by the Taliban and extremists, will have a direct impact on improving security. Therefore, we believe that every effort should be made to maintain and win the support of people by creating employment opportunities and ensuring basic services throughout the country. Without adequate development, employment opportunities and improved socio-economic conditions throughout the country, we will run the risk of ordinary citizens falling hostage to extremist groups.

Regional cooperation is indispensable for defeating the terrorism and extremism affecting stability in Afghanistan and the region. Close cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan continues on a bilateral and multilateral basis to eliminate this scourge, jointly and resolutely. Just last week, we convened the first meeting of the jirga commission, as a follow-up to the peace jirga, held in Kabul in August. The second meeting of the peace jirgah will be held in Pakistan early next year. It is of utmost importance that the collaborative atmosphere in relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan continue. We are following recent developments in Pakistan with concern, as security, stability and normalcy in Pakistan are critical for security and stability in the region.

For us, regional cooperation is the most effective strategy to address the challenges not only of terrorism and illicit drugs, but also of underdevelopment, organized crime and natural disasters. It will also help in translating the region's rich resources and potential into development and prosperity. There are many opportunities for regional cooperation in the areas of trade, energy, transportation, culture and education, water management and joint investment projects. The opportunity must be seized.

Narcotics pose a threat to the stability and well-being of our societies. For our part, we have accelerated efforts to rid Afghanistan of this menace. Apart from those areas where the Taliban and Al-Qaida pose a threat to security, approximately 26,000 hectares of land have been cleared of poppy cultivation, amounting to 13 poppy-free provinces. Moreover, there has been a substantial decrease of cultivation in 12 other provinces. With enhanced law enforcement, we have apprehended 85 traffickers at the Kabul international airport, and 1,016 cases of trafficking have been submitted to the Office of the Attorney General so far this year. Other measures include facilitating the arrest of numerous international traffickers in foreign countries, with the support of INTERPOL.

Nevertheless, in order to achieve long-term and sustainable success in combating narcotics, we must take into account the network character of illicit drugs, entailing farmers, producers, traffickers and consumers. In combating narcotics, our strategy must address all the components. Active participation of transit and consuming countries, on the basis of shared responsibility, is critical to enabling us to contain the menace of illicit drugs. What remain essential in this strategy is providing Afghan farmers with an alternative source of livelihood. In this regard, we count on the sustained support of the international

community to implement our national drug control strategy.

Afghanistan has taken numerous steps to enhance good governance and the rule of law. We have launched reform strategies in various institutions, including the Supreme Court, the Attorney General's Office and the Ministries of Interior and Justice, to enhance efficacy and professionalism in our civil service. To this end, our Civil Service Commission has finalized a revised public administration reform framework and implementation programme to ensure a merit-based appointment mechanism for civil servants. As part of the effort to ensure accountability in our institutions, we have arrested or detained numerous senior and mid-level officials engaged in illegal activities. These measures occurred together with the National Assembly's approval of the United Nations Convention against Corruption in August and ongoing preparations to present our national justice sector strategy. In this context, we express our appreciation to the Government of Italy for co-hosting, along with Afghanistan and the United Nations, an international Conference on the Rule of Law in Afghanistan, which took place in Rome in July.

However, our success in promoting good governance and the rule of law is interlinked with the consolidation of a powerful and independent judiciary, effective State institutions, a functioning civil society and an environment conducive to the economic, social and cultural development of all citizens.

More than 20 years of conflict resulted in dire socio-economic conditions that forced millions of our citizens to migrate abroad. We are grateful to all the countries, particularly Pakistan and Iran, which have hosted millions of our compatriots during some of the most difficult times in our nation's history. While expressing our earnest desire to have all our citizens back home, we call for sustained international assistance to create a feasible environment for their voluntary, gradual, safe and dignified return and reintegration.

The Afghanistan Compact remains the most viable framework to address our remaining challenges. Within the framework of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), we periodically evaluate our progress towards achieving the vision of the Afghanistan Compact with our international partners. While expressing appreciation for the support of the international community for the Afghan process, we would like to stress the need to ensure greater efficiency in the mobilization, coordination and utilization of assistance to implement our national development strategy.

Afghanistan continues to struggle with the legacy of three decades of conflict and with emerging new challenges. Thus, it will not be able to deal with its multitude of problems on its own. It will need the long-sustained and adequate support of the international community for many years to come. The presence and commitment of the international community is an existential issue for Afghanistan. The international community should acknowledge the importance of its continuing commitment to peace and security in Afghanistan, the region and the world. Neither complacency nor exaggerated pessimism will help our efforts to achieve a peaceful and stable Afghanistan.

The role of the United Nations in Afghanistan is of crucial importance for achieving lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan. We commend the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, under the able leadership of Tom Koenigs, in promoting enhanced international engagement and coordination between the international community and Afghanistan to achieve the vision of the Afghanistan Compact.

We are also grateful for the personal dedication and commitment of the Secretary-General to Afghanistan. His visit to Kabul in July, his participation in the international Rome Conference on Rule of Law in Afghanistan in July, and his initiative to convene the high-level meeting on the margins of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly are very much welcomed by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

We are also thankful to all countries that have committed troops to serve alongside forces of our National Army and Police to provide security for our people. We pay particular tribute to the families of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the cause of peace in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I should like to express my delegation's appreciation to our colleagues at the German Mission for their tireless efforts in leading the consultations on the draft resolution before us today. Special thanks go out to Mrs. Maeder-Metcalf of the German Mission in that regard. We also extend our

gratitude to all Member States that have sponsored this year's draft resolution.

Mr. Lobo de Mesquita (Portugal): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, as well as Ukraine, Moldova and Armenia, align themselves with this declaration.

This year we continue to consider a single draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan, and we highly commend the delegation of Germany for its work on draft resolution A/62/L.7.

The European Union welcomes the central role played by the United Nations in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan by leading the efforts of the international community. In that context, we welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 1776 (2007) on 19 September, renewing the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force, and Council resolution 1746 (2007) on 23 March, which extended the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

The European Union and its member States collectively accounted for about 30 per cent of the $12.5 billion in grants pledged by the international community for Afghan reconstruction at international conferences in Tokyo in 2002 and in Berlin in 2004. At the London Conference in 2006, the European Community and its member States pledged a further $2.4 billion for reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan over the coming years.

EU member States are key contributors to the United Nations-mandated and NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), accounting for around half of the military forces deployed within that framework. European Union member States are also commanding or contributing to civil-military provincial reconstruction teams throughout the country. Separately, several member States are also contributing to the United States-led Operation Enduring Freedom coalition, which conducts counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations in Afghanistan.

We also fully support UNAMA's role in finding and implementing political and regional solutions to the challenges facing Afghanistan. Therefore, we welcome the reinforcement made by resolution 1746 (2007), which expanded UNAMA's presence in the provinces through regional and provincial offices. We note that UNAMA's increased field presence has enabled engagement with provincial reconstruction teams, thus ensuring that provincial reconstruction teams achieve a common understanding and approach to the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, in cooperation with the Afghan Government.

In that regard, we underscore the urgent need for an integrated political and military strategy that complements the Strategy and also encompasses wider issues and provides a sharper focus on the achievements of national reconciliation and regional stability. As the high-level meeting on Afghanistan held in New York on 23 September highlighted, a need remains for increased coordination of the efforts of the international community.

We encourage UNAMA to continue its expansion, security conditions permitting. We must take this opportunity to commend UNAMA, under the excellent leadership of Tom Koenig, for its outstanding work, performed under sometimes difficult conditions. We will continue to support that important United Nations mission in ensuring better coordination among the various actors involved.

The European Union expresses its concern about the intensifying insurgency and the general deterioration of security conditions over the past months. Taliban and insurgent groups continue to prevent full security in a significant and growing number of areas, while rates of insurgent and terrorism-related violence have further increased since 2006 and criminal and drug gangs continue to grow. Illegal armed groups remain a deep threat to the stabilization of Afghanistan. As pointed out by the conference on this matter held in Tokyo on 21 June, their disbandment remains crucial. Meanwhile, by taking advantage of some security gaps and the weakness of local administration, criminal gangs and drug smugglers have continued to operate on an ever larger scale, thus creating more instability throughout the country.

On 15 June 2007, the European Union launched a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) mission to Afghanistan in the field of policing with linkages to the wider rule of law. The mission will enhance current efforts in the area of police reform, working towards an Afghan police force with local ownership, one which respects human rights and operates within the framework of the rule of law.

The European Union police mission is set in the wider context of the international community's efforts to support the Government of Afghanistan in taking responsibility for strengthening the rule of law and, in particular, in improving its civil police and law enforcement capacity. The mission will work towards elaborating a joint overall strategy of the international community in police reform. The EU police mission will deploy almost 100 police officers and other experts from EU member States and Third States at the central, regional and provincial levels and plans to be fully operational in March 2008.

We would ask that the Government of Afghanistan engage with the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention as part of its continuing and cooperative approach to combat arbitrary detention and ill-treatment.

Efforts in the security sector must be backed up by hard work to curtail growing widespread corruption. The European Union would like to welcome the endorsement last August by the Wolesi Jirga of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which includes the building of a professional and adequately paid civil service and a transparent system for the appointment of senior officials to prevent corruption from becoming more deeply embedded in the public sector. Corruption not only undermines the effectiveness of international aid; it also breeds mistrust by citizens of the fragile Afghan institutions that have been patiently built over the past few years.

We must also reaffirm the crucial importance of the reform of the justice sector and the implementation of the rule of law for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, recognizing that without justice and the rule of law no sustainable security stabilization, economic development and human rights can be achieved, as was concluded in the Rome Conference on the Rule of Law in Afghanistan that took place on 2 and 3 July 2007. In this context, the European Commission has launched a programme for justice reform which will aim to professionalize the judicial and public prosecution services through forms of pay, grading and recruitment, as well as the establishment of a code of ethics. The programme will also seek to assist in development of a national legal aid system and to improve citizen access to justice. This justice reform programme dovetails with the European Security and Defence Policy police mission, EUPOL Afghanistan. The European Commission is a key contributor to the Law and Order Trust Fund managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

We are deeply concerned about the expansion of opium poppy cultivation by 17 per cent and potential opium production by 34 per cent, which now represents 93 per cent of the worldwide total production of opium. The unprecedented increase of opium production in 2007 poses a grave threat to reconstruction and nation-building in Afghanistan. Initiatives at the regional level, first as the trilateral agreement between Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, reached in June 2007, which committed the countries to carry out more joint border operations and to increase information sharing, must be reinforced and encouraged. Actions taken in accordance with the provisions of the Paris Pact of 2003 must also be developed in order to tackle these problems.

The European Union is also concerned with the human rights situation in Afghanistan. Several recent events have raised particular concerns within the international community. The recent execution of 15 Afghan nationals is a serious setback for the human rights situation in Afghanistan. The European Union has strongly urged the Government of Afghanistan to consider establishing a moratorium on the death penalty. Nonetheless, since 2001, there has been some progress, albeit from a low basis, for example the increase in the number of people with access to basic health care from 19 per cent in 2002 to 89 per cent today.

However, serious challenges remain, including further strengthening women's participation in and contributions to national peace and reconstruction and addressing inadequacies in the number of formal schools and qualified teachers, especially female teachers. Although the number of children in school has risen from an estimated 1 million to 5.4 million today, of whom nearly a third are girls, there are still

2 million children left outside the formal school system, 1.3 million of them being girls. As the Secretary-General noted in his most recent report to the General Assembly and the Security Council, reports of attacks on schools and threats to teachers and students are worrying.

The European Union notes with great concern that violence against women and children and discriminatory traditional practices continue. We encourage the Government of Afghanistan to do all that it can to investigate and prosecute cases of self-immolation, violence against children, forced marriages and honour-related killings. We encourage President Karzai to present to his Cabinet the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan for endorsement and implementation, completed by the Government pursuant to the benchmarks set by the Compact and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy.

In addition to its leading role in the reconstruction effort, the European Union is a major source of humanitarian assistance to the people affected by the Afghan crisis, both in Afghanistan and in neighbouring Pakistan and Iran. European Union member States and the European Community are also actively involved in the provision of emergency and relief assistance. Total European Union contributions for 2002-2006 amounted to €627.5 million. The European Union also expresses its concern about the recent attacks against the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and its Chairman by a significant number of members of parliament. We urge the Afghan authorities to ensure the security of the members of this Commission and provide necessary conditions for them to fulfil their mission. The European Union also stresses that the national peace and reconciliation process must be conducted in a way that is fully compatible with the need to fight against impunity and ensure justice for past crimes and serious violations of human rights.

Those challenges notwithstanding, important steps have been made towards the reconstruction and stabilization of Afghanistan. At a regional level, the European Union acknowledges with satisfaction the collaborative atmosphere that has begun to prevail in Afghan-Pakistani relations, as terrorism was recognized as a shared challenge. Therefore, we welcome the peace jirga that took place in Kabul with the participation of Presidents Karzai and Musharraf last August, as well as the joint declaration that issued from that event. The European Union welcomes this declaration and encourages both countries to further develop their dialogue and cooperation, especially on security issues and the fight against terrorism. The European Union will further support the enhancement of Afghan-Pakistani relations, including within the framework of the Group of Eight-Afghanistan-Pakistan initiative.

The European Union also welcomes the adoption of the Media Law by both houses of parliament. As the Special Representative of the Secretary-General recently noted, the independence of Afghan media now seems to be largely protected.

Finally, we would draw the urgent attention of both the Afghan Government and the National Assembly to the Electoral Law, in order to ensure its adoption by the end of 2007, owing to its importance for the preparation of the presidential elections that will take place in 2009. We hope that, building on the success of the last elections, which represented a significant achievement for Afghanistan, we will take another step on the road to stability, security and prosperity for the Afghan people.

Let me conclude this statement by stressing that the European Union remains committed to the long-term reconstruction of Afghanistan. We continue to support the Afghanistan Compact, which we consider the principal framework for future reconstruction and stabilization of the country until 2010. While acknowledging the central role played by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board in facilitating and monitoring the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact, we welcome further efforts to provide appropriate high-level political guidance and promote more coherent international engagement. Therefore, the European Union pledges to work with the Afghan Government and international partners within that framework to build a prosperous, secure and democratic Afghanistan.

Mr. Jeenbaev (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO): Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The adoption by consensus of the Afghanistan Compact at the London Conference demonstrated the

international community's firm resolve to continue to provide broad assistance in the post-conflict recovery of Afghanistan. Our commitment to the reconstruction process in Afghanistan was also reaffirmed at the recent high-level meeting at the United Nations. In the post-Bonn stage, it continues to be important that the central coordinating role in international efforts in Afghanistan should be played by the United Nations. We must fully carry out all the tasks set out in the Compact. The key issues of security, combating narcotics, governance and respect for human rights must be resolved within the established deadlines. We believe that, under United Nations auspices, comprehensive monitoring and coordination of the implementation of the Compact will continue. An essential factor in the long-term stabilization of Afghanistan is participation by all sectors of society and political and religious forces in the establishment of a sovereign and effective Afghan Government.

As a result of the recent situation, we are seriously concerned about the resumption of terrorist activity by the Taliban and Al-Qaida. Once again, the extremists are undermining security throughout the country. This year, as members are aware, the level of violence has exceeded the level for 2006 and the number of criminal armed groups and drug-dealing bands continues to grow. That is undermining confidence in the country's recovery. Concrete measures are needed to prevent further deterioration of the security situation in the country.

Therefore, we must continue to isolate extremist leaders, first and foremost those on the sanctions list created by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), while allowing rank-and-file members of the Taliban who have not committed war crimes to participate fully in peaceful life. That is the approach that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan should follow in carrying out its mandate. We disagree with the idea that it is possible to stabilize the situation in the country by making peace with supposedly repentant members of the Taliban. Experience shows that that would only help to strengthen the position of extremists and increase their subversive activities.

The problem of illegal drug trafficking is one of the complex barriers preventing the achievement of stability and security for the people of Afghanistan. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported a 17 per cent increase in the land devoted to opium poppy cultivation and a possible 34 per cent increase in opium production. Thus the 2007 opium harvest in Afghanistan exceeded 8,000 tons, a significant portion of which transits through CSTO States. In addition, nearly all of that opium is being processed into heroin on Afghan territory, showing that the drug traffickers do not lack precursors and equipment with which to supply the underground laboratories. We are extremely concerned that poppy cultivation and the production and illegal trade in opium, which are important sources of funds for the Taliban and Al-Qaida, are continuing.

As we can see from UNODC research, illegal drug trafficking seriously threatens not only the people of Afghanistan, but also the international community as a whole. We must actively combat that scourge not only in the countries neighbouring Afghanistan through the creation of anti-drug programmes and financial security, but also in belts that should be set up under United Nations coordination and with the participation of neighbouring countries. We believe that the CSTO and NATO should undertake joint practical measures, with the participation of Afghan and Pakistani security forces, to combat terrorism and drug trafficking.

For instance, those forces could participate in the regularly conducted CSTO Kamal operation, which seeks to create an anti-drug belt around Afghanistan's borders. During the past few years, that operation has created mechanisms for combating narco-business on the northern route of the drug trade from Afghanistan to Europe. As a result of measures undertaken by CSTO member States, as well as by the observer States of Azerbaijan, Iran, China and Pakistan, dozens of tons of narcotic drugs have been confiscated by the competent authorities. We note with satisfaction that in September 2007, for the first time, Afghanistan participated in the Kamal operation.

Further measures must be taken to increase the military capacity of Afghanistan's armed forces, so that they can independently guarantee the country's security in the future. We must provide the Afghan National Army with modern weapons, including planes and armour, and enhance professional training of military personnel. CSTO member States are prepared to establish military cooperation with Afghanistan for that purpose, even on a bilateral basis.

The States members of the CSTO have made a long-term commitment to Afghanistan's recovery

through regional cooperation in key areas, including security, economic recovery and the fight against illegal drug trafficking. We believe that an important factor in the promotion of a comprehensive settlement is multilateral cooperation between Afghanistan and the other States in the region. Any programme to assist Afghanistan should bear in mind its regional partners, which could serve as sources of the goods and services ordered by donor Governments and international organizations.

In conclusion, I wish to express my gratitude to the delegation of Germany for coordinating the efforts to prepare the draft resolution on Afghanistan. We are prepared to support that document.

Mr. Aslov (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO): the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan. Those States maintain friendly relations with their close neighbour Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is a very important partner in the region and has great potential. Transportation routes to South Asia cross its territory. The situation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan significantly affects stability and security in the region, where the presence of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is becoming increasingly visible. The situation in that country today is therefore one of main priorities on the Organization's current agenda.

We appreciate the progress made in Afghanistan, primarily in the field of statehood development, with the comprehensive support of the international community, during the time since the fall of the Taliban. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has been adopted, presidential and parliamentary elections have been held, the Government and judicial bodies have been established, and the Afghan armed forces and the country's economy are being revived. In addition, independent mass media and human rights organizations are operating in Afghanistan.

At the same time, we must note that the stability of Afghanistan is the key to addressing some of the most serious regional threats to SCO members, including the threat posed by narcotics, the spread of religious extremism and terrorism.

Regrettably, the situation in the country remains extremely tense. That is primarily due to the increase in the subversive activities of the Taliban movement and Al-Qaida, as well as unresolved key socio-economic problems. The fact that extremists are much more often turning to hostage-taking to achieve their political goals is of particular concern. In the face of the increasing threat posed by implacable extremists, strict compliance with the Security Council sanctions regime, including by the Government of Afghanistan, is particularly essential.

We share the belief in the importance of implementing the programme of national reconciliation in order to achieve long-term stabilization of the situation in the country. At the same time, that process should not run counter to the Security Council's decisions and the goal of totally eliminating the threat of terrorism emanating from the territory of the country. Serious concerns have been raised with regard to the participation in public bodies of persons on the sanctions list of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999).

The developing military and political situation requires an update of actions on the part of both the Government of Afghanistan and the international presences. It is urgently necessary to adopt further measures to build up and appropriately equip Afghan armed forces that will independently be able to ensure the security of the citizens of the country. There is also a need for additional efforts to promote socio-economic rehabilitation.

We are convinced that victory over the extremists is impossible without effective interaction between all healthy forces of Afghan society. The achievement of that goal is central to success in the military stand-off involving illegal military groups, as well as success in efforts to eradicate such appalling socio-economic phenomena as corruption and the drug industry. That interaction is also linked to the fate of virtually all the reforms under way and, ultimately, to the well-being of the people themselves.

It is clear that the subversive activities of extremists and terrorists are fuelled by significant financial resources, the majority of which continue to come from drug trafficking. The enormous rise in the illicit production of drugs is indeed alarming, as the funds generated as a result of their sale are also channelled to the purchasing of arms and armaments. It

is necessary to substantially expand anti-drug efforts, not only in the territory of Afghanistan but around it as well, through a complex system of anti-narcotics and financial security belts under the coordination of the United Nations and with the involvement of neighbouring countries.

There is also a need to make better use of the capabilities of regional organizations that have proven their effectiveness in this area, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. SCO member States support the idea put forward by Tajikistan and Russia on the establishment of anti-narcotics security belts around Afghanistan. To that end, the President of Russia has proposed an initiative to enhance anti-narcotics and antiterrorism defences around Afghanistan by establishing financial security zones, with financial intelligence being provided by SCO member States. We believe that those measures will considerably undermine the financial base for terrorist activity.

The recent SCO summit meeting held in Bishkek reaffirmed the extensive potential of the organization to implement stabilization programmes in Afghanistan, including their counter-terrorism and anti-narcotics aspects. SCO member States are capable of promoting substantial peacekeeping initiatives. That was confirmed by the decision adopted by the SCO following a Russian proposal to convene a regional conference on Afghanistan under the auspices of the organization.

We attach great importance to establishing a peaceful, independent and self-sufficient State in Afghanistan, free from terrorism and narcotics. In that connection, we believe that the early completion of the country's post-war rehabilitation should be based on the key principles of the Bonn Conference and the Afghanistan Compact, including the basic principle of developing good-neighbourly relations with contiguous States.

Maintaining the ethnic balance in the system of State authority bodies and Government continues to be important to strengthening the fundamentals of the international peace in Afghanistan. Afghans themselves should seek possible compromises in this area, without external pressures.

Military measures alone are insufficient to overcome the problems of Afghanistan. At the current stage, it is necessary to focus on the revival of the almost completely destroyed Afghan economy, under the auspices of the United Nations. The Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board is playing a particularly positive role in that regard.

SCO member States are actively participating in the implementation of a number of projects to restore the energy, transportation and social infrastructure of Afghanistan. The Republic of Kazakhstan has announced the launching of its special programme for Afghanistan, which includes investing in the Afghan economy and the implementation of humanitarian projects.

Achieving stability in Afghanistan will facilitate its integration into the region and allow SCO member States to fully utilize the organization's potential in assisting with the socio-economic rehabilitation of the Afghan State. We expect that the joint efforts of the international community and the Afghan Government will make it possible to implement the comprehensive programme for Afghanistan's rehabilitation.

We express our support for the draft resolution on Afghanistan (A/62/L.7), which has been sponsored by a large number of members. We hope that its adoption by consensus will provide momentum to the efforts of the international community in Afghanistan.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): The United States is pleased to join the other Member States that have sponsored this draft resolution (A/62/L.7) on the situation in Afghanistan. The draft resolution details the progress that the Afghan people and the international community have made since the liberation of Afghanistan from the oppressive Taliban regime and its terrorist allies. We join others in recognizing the efforts of the Secretary-General, his Special Representative, the staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and all the forces participating in the International Security Assistance Force and Operation Enduring Freedom.

The success of Afghanistan is vitally important, not only for the long-suffering Afghan people, but also for the world. Today, most of the world's security problems emanate from the broader Middle East, just as Europe and East Asia were the principal sources of instability in the twentieth century. Extremist ideologies, militant transnational groups, deep internal tensions in key countries and intractable regional conflicts, including efforts at regional hegemony — all these and other factors combine to produce an unstable and dangerous dynamic that harm not only the

countries of the region, but also project insecurity around the world.

Afghanistan under the Taliban exemplifies that phenomenon. The regime persecuted and oppressed the people. Its internal war involved regional Powers in a deadly geopolitical competition. It also harboured an array of terrorist organizations that actively targeted countries around the world. The toppling of the Taliban regime was an important first step. However, reshaping the dysfunctional politics of the broader Middle East will continue to be the defining challenge of our time.

Afghanistan's success is essential to making progress towards a functional broader Middle East. A great deal of progress has been made in Afghanistan including the adoption of a progressive constitution, free and fair national elections for president and parliament, a broadly inclusive national Government, the disarmament of formal militias, the establishment of a free press, progress in building key institutions, such as a national army, and a rapidly growing economy. All of this has been made possible by the work of the Afghan people and their leaders, as well as the contributions and assistance of the friends of Afghanistan in the international community

However, Afghanistan still has a long way to go in completing this transition to a prosperous democratic State. The United States remains committed to supporting this transition, and welcomes the continued involvement of the international community.

Foremost among the challenges are the security threats posed by the Taliban and Al-Qaida forces wishing to re-impose their tyranny on the Afghan people. Their targets are not just Afghan and international security forces, but also innocent Afghan citizens and Afghan institutions, such as schools, which are being built to serve the people of Afghanistan. Members of the Taliban should lay down their arms and participate in the accountability and reconciliation process.

Secondly, Afghanistan's internal situation is undermined by the availability of external sanctuaries and support for the Taliban and Al-Qaida. Those sanctuaries should be eliminated and be replaced by increased regional cooperation against extremists and terrorists.

Thirdly, insufficient progress has been made in terms of State-building. There are great successes, particularly the Afghan National Army and the National Solidarity Programme, but the National Police and some of the other ministries that deliver services require much effort. Moreover, some areas in Afghanistan lack good governance at the provincial and local levels. Where officials are weak, ineffective or abusive, the good will and support of the people is put at risk. Afghanistan cannot succeed if the people do not actively support their Government.

Fourthly, the rising production of opium poppies risks the creation of a narco-State and the supplanting of the legal economy by criminal elements. We urge the Afghan Government to take the necessary stops to deal with those challenges.

The United States reaffirms its commitment to its partnership with the Afghan people. As demonstrated on 11 September 2001, American security is inextricably linked with Afghanistan's security. The United States will continue to help the Afghan people and their leaders as long as it takes for Afghanistan to succeed. We call on the international community to continue to join in this commitment to Afghanistan, in particular in implementing the Afghanistan Compact and, for those with forces in Afghanistan, though contributions to the International Security Assistance Force mission.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): This debate is a timely opportunity for the international community to review the situation in Afghanistan and to enhance its contribution to the realization of our agreed objective of seeking peace, stability and development in that country.

Pakistan has a vital stake in the success of those efforts. It has suffered directly and more than any other country from the consequences of the decades of conflict and human tragedy in Afghanistan, which have impacted our social and economic fabric, disturbed peace and tranquillity on our border regions and given rise to the common threat of extremism and terrorism. Pakistan's commitment to peace and stability in Afghanistan derives from our common vision — a vision of common strategic and economic interests, as well as the bonds of geography, history, faith and culture, which link the destinies of our two nations.

Peace and stability in the region are also essential in order to enable Afghanistan and Pakistan to serve eventually as the hub for the shortest and most economical corridors for trade in raw materials, goods

and energy between Central Asia and South and West Asia and beyond. Pakistan will host the third Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan early next year.

The cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan spans the entire spectrum. There is dialogue and regular exchange of visits at the highest level. Bilateral trade is now $1.5 billion. Despite our own financial constraints, Pakistan is participating significantly in Afghanistan's economic development and reconstruction. Our $300 million assistance package for Afghanistan is the largest cooperation programme that Pakistan has with any country.

We are also engaged in security-in-intelligence cooperation, including through the tripartite commission, which includes the United States and NATO forces. Much of the success in the campaign against terrorism has been achieved with our support and cooperation. We have made enormous sacrifices — more than any other country in this struggle — in order to interdict illegal cross-border movement, which is a joint responsibility. Pakistan has established 1,000 border posts and deployed over 100,000 troops on our side of the border with Afghanistan.

Indeed, one of the reasons for the latest developments in Pakistan was the need to deal with the threat of terrorism and extremism. This should not be a matter of concern, especially to our brothers in Afghanistan. On the contrary, it will enhance our ability to ensure security on our frontier and contribute to regional security.

One of the major outstanding challenges that we face is related to Afghan refugees. Pakistan continues to host more than 2 million Afghan refugees. We have now agreed on the repatriation of all Afghan refugees living in Pakistan within the framework of the tripartite agreement of 2 August 2007. Additionally, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees have also reached an agreement to expedite closure of four Afghan refugee camps close to the border because of security concerns. Voluntary, safe and orderly return of refugees and their reintegration will contribute to the stability of Afghanistan and the region. We expect the United Nations and the international community to assist in this objective with all necessary resources.

The complex and interconnected challenges in Afghanistan require a correspondingly integrated, coherent and coordinated response. Though relying on international support, such a response must have strong, national ownership, which is indispensable to effectively tackling the multitude of problems, most of which are internal problems within Afghanistan. Extension of Government authority and indigenous capacity-building are essential to increasingly assuming responsibility, while progressively reducing reliance on foreign partners. A successful strategy in Afghanistan must be based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the political, security and developmental aspects in parallel. Political dialogue and reconciliation have to be an essential part of this strategy. Such a strategy would have to build peace painstakingly, district by district, region by region, since circumstances in each area differ.

Security is, of course, is the major challenge throughout Afghanistan. The report of the Secretary-General notes that at least 78 districts of Afghanistan are currently rated as "extremely risky." On top of this, there are large parts of Afghanistan that are ungoverned spaces or under parallel power structures, controlled by insurgents. These are the sanctuaries that need to be eliminated before seeking to externalize Afghanistan's problems.

Apart from insurgent and terrorist activity, insecurity and violence are caused by several other factors, including factional fighting, criminal activity, illegal armed groups, warlords and drug barons. A strong nexus has developed between the drug trade and terrorist activity. An objective analysis and proper understanding of this complex security matrix is required in order to formulate an effective response.

The call for violence and conflict emanates from terrorist groups — foreign militants such as Al-Qaida and militant Taliban, who are not prepared to reconcile and give up the path of violence. These elements must be directly confronted. However, the military strategy must seek to avoid civilian casualties and should be conducted in a manner so as not to exacerbate the alienation and grievances of the population. While terrorists have to be defeated, the extremists need to be convinced and converted.

The Taliban are part of the Afghan social phenomenon. Most of them can be won over. President Karzai's offer of dialogue and reconciliation to the Taliban is therefore welcomed. Despite its rejection by some Taliban leaders, we believe that his is the right

approach and should be pursued. The report of the Secretary-General also calls for a more comprehensive counter-insurgency strategy, including political outreach to the affected groups. Pakistan is assisting in such peace and reconciliation efforts through the joint jirga process. A smaller 15 member jirga has been, among other things, mandated to expedite the ongoing dialogue for peace and reconciliation. This smaller jirga is meeting now in Islamabad.

We also need to pay attention to the concerns and aspirations of the common people, the common population of Afghanistan, which, in certain areas and for diverse reasons, has sympathy for the viewpoint of the Taliban and is thus susceptible to extremism. While isolating Al-Qaida terrorists and die-hard militants, it is important to win the hearts and minds of the population. Good governance and rule of law are required to counter the problems of neglect, exclusion and interference, which are common causes of their grievances. Hearts and minds cannot be won, when there is neither security nor any tangible improvement in the lives of the ordinary people.

Despite improvement in several economic and social indicators, the pace of economic development and reconstruction in Afghanistan, especially in the south, remain slow and uneven. The problem is more severe in areas where insecurity abounds, thus further alienating those local populations. Besides the need to ensure the fulfilment of all existing commitments, we must drastically increase the resources available for economic recovery and reconstruction. It is also important to develop and utilize local and national capacities for development and reconstruction. This would significantly reduce costs and ensure that most of the funding for aid is spent for the purposes intended.

This year's second successive increase on record in poppy cultivation in Afghanistan is perhaps the most disturbing development and represents a grave danger, considering the cross-cutting nature of the drug problem. The failed drug strategy is quickly converting Afghanistan into a virtual drug economy. Drug money is financing terrorist and insurgent activity. A comprehensive and balanced counter-narcotics strategy is required, along with greater resources. This strategy should focus on providing gainful and sustainable livelihoods in the rural areas and break the link between drug money and the financing of terrorist and insurgent activity — and criminality — in Afghanistan.

It is also vital to address the other cross-cutting problem, that is, corruption. The report of the Secretary-General and the draft resolution under consideration note the effects of corruption on security, good governance, counter-narcotics efforts and economic development. In this context, it is also important to build the capacity of the Afghan national security institutions. Properly equipped, trained, paid and ethnically-balanced professional forces would also help to reduce reliance on foreign forces for security, counter-insurgency and law and order.

We would like to thank the delegation of Germany for coordinating the formulation of the draft resolution on Afghanistan. We believe the text addresses all the relevant issues in a comprehensive and balanced manner. Pakistan has, therefore, joined in co-sponsoring this resolution, which we hope will be adopted by consensus.

No doubt the challenges faced by Afghanistan are immense. The road to durable peace and development is difficult, but the objective is achievable. Afghanistan is fortunate to enjoy the continuing support of the international community. From the neighbouring countries to the international partners, including NATO the International Security Assistance Force and the United Nations: all have an important stake in the success of Afghanistan. Their commitment and engagement will be required for the long run. For there can be no short cut to success in Afghanistan. What is needed at this stage is to combine our resources and coordinate our policies and approaches into a comprehensive and winning strategy in Afghanistan. Pakistan will continue to pay its leading role in this collective endeavour.

The Acting President: Before concluding, I would like to inform members that, at the request of the sponsors and as reflected in the Journal, consideration of agenda item 16, "Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development", and agenda item 20, "The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan", have been postponed to a later date, to be announced.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

United Nations A/62/PV.45

General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

45th plenary meeting
Monday, 5 November 2007, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia))

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 19 (*continued*)

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/345)

Draft resolution (A/62/L.7)

Mr. Al-Najem (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation is pleased to congratulate Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and to thank him for his sincere efforts to ensure success in Afghanistan and to achieve peace and stability there. His continuous efforts have included his personal visit to Afghanistan in July and his presiding over the Rome Conference on The Rule of Law in Afghanistan. His efforts also included alternately presiding with President K[illegible]zai over the high-level meetin[illegible] on Afghanistan held last September in the margins of the general debate during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. We also wish to commend the efforts of his Special Representative for Afghanistan and of United Nations staff, who continue to carry out their duties under difficult and increasingly dangerous circumstances and whose courage and dedication have been fundamental in achieving progress on the ground in Afghanistan.

We would also like to thank the representative of Germany for introducing the draft resolution (A/62/L.7) on the situation in Afghanistan. My country supports that draft resolution, which emphasizes the key and impartial role of the United Nations in strengthening peace and stability in Afghanistan by leading the efforts of the international community.

Recurring wars in the course of more than two decades have caused tremendous damage in all areas of life in Afghanistan. They have taken a heavy toll in lives and caused the destruction of infrastructure in the areas of water, electricity services, transportation, communications, education and health care. They have also led to the collapse of the economic and financial systems and for the deterioration of the basic agricultural infrastructure.

As the transition in Afghanistan comes under increasing strain due to the insurgency, weak governance and an economy based on drugs, the Government of Afghanistan, with the support of the international community, will need to demonstrate political will by boldly taking the initiative in each of those areas and working to restore confidence among the population in tangible ways. As the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan (A/62/345) points out, without stronger leadership from the Government, greater donor coherence — including improved coordination between the military and the civilian international engagement in Afghanistan — and a strong commitment from neighbouring countries, many of the security,

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

07-58370 (E)

institution-building and development gains made since the Bonn Conference may yet stall or even be reversed.

The State of Kuwait strongly condemns the rise in violence and suicide attacks in Afghanistan, in particular in the southern and eastern provinces, due to an increase in acts of violence and terrorism carried out by the Taliban movement, Al-Qaida, other militant groups, and groups active in the drug trade. That has led to an increase in the number of victims among the Afghan civilian population, the Afghan national security forces, the International Security Assistance Force, the coalition forces of Operation Enduring Freedom, employees of Afghan and international aid agencies and those working in the field of humanitarian assistance.

In addition to the progress made in numerous areas — such as in disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating child soldiers from Afghan military forces and in providing care for other children injured in the war — achievements in the areas of mine action, developing the Afghan National Army and Police and enhancing their capabilities, strengthening Afghan and international commitment to reforming the judiciary and integrating Afghanistan into the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation also provide opportunities to increase regional economic cooperation for development. However, the pace of change in the living conditions of the Afghan people is still very slow and is a source of increasing frustration for the civilian population.

The continued increase in opium production is an ever-greater threat to stability and nation-building in Afghanistan: the cultivation of opium, the production and trafficking in drugs and the increasingly strong links between the drug trade and the terrorist activities of extremist groups all pose a serious threat to security, the rule of law and development. That requires that the Government pay greater attention to the dangers posed by drugs and that it prosecute smugglers. With support from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the international community must support an Afghan Government integrated plan of action in that regard.

The State of Kuwait urgently appeals to all Member States, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations to continue to provide Afghanistan with all the humanitarian assistance it needs, in close cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan and in accordance with its national development strategies.

In that regard, the State of Kuwait has contributed to the reconstruction of Afghanistan by donating $4 million over the past five years to support United Nations efforts to help the Afghans and Afghan refugees. The Kuwait Fund for Economic Development granted a loan of $30 million in fulfilment of the commitments we made at the Tokyo Conference, $15 million of which was earmarked for the now-completed reconstruction of the highway between Kandahar and Spin Boldak and $15 million for the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund.

The assistance provided by the Kuwaiti Red Crescent Society during the past five years exceeds $6.5 million. Other Kuwaiti charities and organizations are also continuing to provide assistance.

Finally, we hope that the international organization will continue its efforts to assist the Afghan Government to strengthen peace and stability in Afghanistan. That will in turn have a positive impact on the situation in the region and enable Afghanistan to resume its natural role in the international community.

Mr. Shinyo (Japan): Japan appreciates this opportunity today to discuss the situation in Afghanistan in the General Assembly. We thank the delegation of Germany for preparing the draft resolution (A/62/L.7) before us. As a sponsor, Japan fully supports the draft resolution. I believe that the adoption of the draft resolution will demonstrate the renewed will of Member States to support Afghanistan.

With the organization and strengthening of Afghan Government institutions, there has been progress in nation-building in Afghanistan since the international community agreed the Afghanistan Compact, two years ago. We welcome those developments and commend the Afghan Government for its tireless efforts in that regard.

At the same time, however, we must acknowledge the worrisome reality of the current conditions in the country. As the draft resolution illustrates, the challenges facing Afghanistan are intertwined and are yet to be resolved. The international community must coordinate its efforts at effective and efficient assistance. Next year, Japan will host a meeting of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB). To date, the JCMB has been the most useful framework to

coordinate and prioritize international assistance and reconstruction programmes. We look forward to discussing at the next meeting how we can better deliver our assistance to the nation.

I would like to take this opportunity to stress the pivotal role that the United Nations has played in leading international efforts. Japan appreciates the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, which has expanded its presence in the provinces under difficult conditions. We pay tribute to its staff for their dedication. Japan also extends its appreciation to Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, for his dedicated efforts. We wish his successor further success, building on the achievements of Mr. Koenigs.

Improving the security situation is the most pressing of the various tasks to be addressed. While we take note of the strengthening of the Afghan National Army and the efforts to reform the Afghan National Police, the growing frequency of terrorist acts is a matter of great concern for us. We must not allow terrorism to prevail in Afghanistan. We must not let Afghanistan revert to being a safe haven for terrorists. It is essential that the international community continue to present a united front in the fight against terrorism.

We also wish to underscore the continuing importance of the tenacious activities of the International Security Assistance Force and the Operation Enduring Freedom coalition, including its maritime interdiction component.

In order to play a responsible role in the international community's joint efforts, Japan's Maritime Self-Defence Force has been refuelling vessels of the maritime interdiction component of the Operation Enduring Freedom coalition, based on its anti-terrorism special measures law. Although Japan had to terminate refuelling activities due to the expiration of the law on 2 November, the Government of Japan will continue its effort to achieve the early enactment of the new law that is now under consideration at the Diet to provide a legal basis for the resumption of such refuelling activities as soon as possible.

As stressed in the draft resolution, the disbandment of illegal armed groups is one of the keys to stabilizing the country. Much needs to be done in that area, building on the results of the Tokyo Conference held in June, in particular improving coordination between disbandment and police reform efforts and other security-sector reform activities.

Other issues, such as narcotics and corruption, are also impeding nation-building in Afghanistan. Japan places importance on a comprehensive approach, with capacity-building at its core, in addressing those issues. In addition to assistance in the amount of $1.24 billion already provided, we will continue to explore possibilities to extend further assistance in response to the requests of the Afghan people.

Japan will assume the chairmanship of the Group of Eight next year. Notwithstanding the challenges ahead of us, we look forward to working with our partners in the international community for the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Mr. Hanesson (Iceland): Iceland, as a member of the European Economic Area but not of the European Union (EU), has aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the EU. However, I would, in addition, like to make a few remarks.

Allow me first of all to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/62/345) on the current situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security. As in previous years, Iceland is a traditional sponsor of the draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan, contained this year in document A/62/L.7. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the delegation of Germany for preparing and facilitating the draft resolution.

The report of the Secretary-General clearly indicates that Afghanistan has made significant progress towards political, economic and social development since the fall of the Taliban. An important case in point is the immense growth in schooling for Afghanistan's children, including for girls. However, the report also clearly identifies the serious and complex challenges and threats that Afghanistan still faces, and underscores the need for a comprehensive approach.

Much more remains to be done with regard to institution-building, strengthening the rule of law and the practice of good governance. Afghan ownership is a key issue in that regard, as my German colleague

stated this morning. In that connection, the United Nations is key to coordinating the efforts of the international community. I would like to express our gratitude to, and admiration of, the way in which United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan is working in Afghanistan under the leadership of Tom Koenigs, often in very difficult and dangerous environments.

The security situation in Afghanistan remains a cause for concern and continues to undermine reconstruction and confidence-building efforts. The work of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), led by NATO, is crucial in that context. The increasing role and effectiveness of the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Security Forces and the Afghan National Police are also vital elements in uprooting the insurgency and ensuring long-term security in cooperation with ISAF. We welcome the conclusions contained in the Secretary-General's report regarding the need for an effective, integrated civilian-military strategy and security plan for Afghanistan.

Iceland strongly condemns attacks against civilians and international staff intended to undermine the democratic process. The increase in violence and in the Taliban-led insurgency has grave implications for the human rights and humanitarian situation. We note with the greatest concern that there has been an overall increase in reported violence against women across the country.

We remain concerned about the continued increase in opium production and poppy growing, which reached record levels this year, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Opium production and narcotics trafficking undermine reconstruction and nation-building in Afghanistan. We must increase our efforts, including through regional cooperation, to combat this evil at all levels. Drug traffickers must be brought to justice. Here, we would emphasize the vital role of the UNODC.

The Government of Afghanistan also needs to take firm measures to tackle corruption and weak governance, which are serious obstacles to economic and social development. Indeed, the draft resolution before us expresses deep concern about those developments.

We strongly support the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, which has an important supporting role to play in confidence-building and promoting respect for human rights.

Iceland is firmly committed to making its contribution to peacebuilding efforts in Afghanistan. In 2004, Iceland played the leading role in the operation of Kabul international airport by providing the Commander of the airport base, and since then we have provided technical and support staff to facilitate that operation. Iceland now deploys half of its personnel working in international peacekeeping operations to the Mission in Afghanistan and is currently looking at further options aimed at rebuilding and supporting the infrastructure in the country.

The international community must stand united in rebuilding Afghanistan and strengthening its democracy. Achieving our goals in Afghanistan depends on long-term political commitment on the part of all stakeholders, the Government of Afghanistan and the international community. Increased regional cooperation and strong commitment by neighbouring countries is also of the utmost importance. The United Nations has a key role to play in such efforts. Iceland remains firmly committed to supporting the United Nations and other international partners in building a secure and democratic Afghanistan.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): We recognize that Afghanistan faces serious ongoing challenges and that it will require assistance from the international community for some time to come. Considerable effort is being directed to helping with the development of the Afghanistan National Army and Police so that Afghanistan will eventually be able to provide for its own security. However, there is no military solution to the problems of Afghanistan; military and policing inputs need to be complemented by development initiatives aimed at building Afghanistan's State institutions and its economy. We hope that the overall international and local effort can be better brought together in order to make more rapid progress.

Opium production is undermining the future of Afghanistan. Alongside eradication, the international community needs to commit to the development of alternative sustainable livelihoods. The Afghan people will support an international presence only if they believe that it will improve their lives, their security and their prosperity. That requires an approach that fully integrates the political, security, economic and social aspects of peacebuilding.

The United Nations, through the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), has a central role to play in coordinating international assistance to Afghanistan, and also in helping the Government to rebuild the country's civil institutions. In addition, the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, established under the Afghanistan Compact to oversee the implementation of the Compact and of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, is a critical mechanism to improve overall coordination. Afghanistan's neighbours have an important role to play, as the pace of development will be affected by the degree to which those States assist in the rebuilding process and cooperate with Afghanistan to improve its security.

Afghanistan's economic development needs to be greatly accelerated. Afghan producers need assured access to profitable markets, internally and in neighbouring countries, if the Afghan people are to be given the opportunity to move from being reliant on aid to being self-sustaining and responsible for their own economic choices.

Since 2001, New Zealand has made a substantial commitment to the international effort to secure and rebuild Afghanistan. We contribute to UNAMA. We are also an active contributor to NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. New Zealand's Provincial Reconstruction Team provides security in Bamian province. In Bamian, the New Zealand Defence Force works closely with the New Zealand Agency for International Development and the New Zealand Police. We have worked to make a practical difference: improving the lives of the people of Bamian. We also provide training to the Afghan police there. We have helped with the construction of schools, roads, bridges and a maternity ward.

We all recognize that Afghanistan faces difficult social, political, economic and security challenges. The Government and the people of Afghanistan are courageously taking up the challenge of addressing those challenges, in particular through efforts to develop resilient and sustainable Afghan National Army and Police forces. Nevertheless, the extent of the challenge will require sustained commitment and continuity of effort from the international community.

In closing, I should like to express our support for the draft resolution on Afghanistan (A/62/L.7) and to thank Germany for its role in facilitating that consensus text.

Mr. Shervani (India): Let me begin by expressing India's appreciation for the scheduling of this discussion on a subject of great significance for us, our region and the world. I also commend the outstanding effort by the delegation of Germany in coordinating the intergovernmental negotiations that have brought forth this improved version of the annual General Assembly draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan (A/62/L.7). We are happy to continue to sponsor this draft resolution, which should be adopted by consensus, as in the past.

Today, the General Assembly has the opportunity to review developments since the high-level meeting held in this building nearly two months ago, which was presided over by the Secretary-General and President Karzai. We welcome the communiqué adopted at that meeting as a symbol of the international community's commitment to the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan in an involvement that must be long-term if it is to succeed. Today's draft resolution is a further sign of our collective determination.

The international community shares the goal of creating a peaceful, stable and democratic Afghanistan, securely restored to the path of socio-economic development and anchored within its region. The central challenge we face in achieving that objective is the need for a security environment that is conducive to addressing the challenges in a developing nation that has undergone unparalleled levels of destruction and privation. We must collectively upgrade our efforts, directly and indirectly, to restore security to Afghanistan. At the same time, we must expand direct assistance in reconstruction and development while simultaneously developing capacities in Afghanistan to enable maximum local involvement in nation-building. Those aspects are reflected in the resolution before us.

The international community needs to consider whether it has done all it can to avoid duplication and improve coordination on the ground in Afghanistan and whether the targets we have set are achievable and based on ground realities. In all candour, there is room to fine-tune our efforts in both areas.

First, we need to set realistic and achievable benchmarks of progress. They must be based on the reality of where Afghanistan is coming from, rather than reflect an idealized version of what we expect

Afghanistan to be. That is essential if the national ownership of our Afghan partners of the development process is to have genuine meaning.

Second, we must expand coordination on the ground, both among ourselves and with Afghan interlocutors. Assistance must be more closely linked to Afghan priorities, as reflected in the National Development Strategy and the Afghanistan Compact. The challenge for us is to transform our commitments into realistic, coordinated and effective strategies and concrete outcomes on the ground, including through the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board.

Therefore, our collective goal must be to set ourselves reasonable expectations and build upon the significant successes recorded thus far, while recognizing that the road ahead will be long. We must redouble our political and economic commitment to help Afghanistan over the medium to long term, and maintain our resolve in the face of challenges in the short term.

Of these challenges, none is more of a test of our collective will than that posed by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other terrorist and extremist groups. This threat is the key — and I repeat, the key — challenge to our collective efforts in Afghanistan, and its first objective is to weaken our resolve. Therefore, we cannot afford to underestimate the ongoing resurgence of terrorist groups.

India fully supports the Afghan position that the challenge of terrorism — especially the recent and growing trend of suicide attacks, cross-border infiltration and the growing nexus between terrorism and drug trafficking — requires both a robust international political solution and a stronger military response at the local level. We need to display our sustained resolve, while steadily fortifying the ability of Afghan agencies to respond to this challenge.

Most of all, terrorism must be addressed realistically, on the basis of a clear-eyed perception of what and who are involved and how to respond to all aspects of the problem. We must not be tempted by partial solutions that provide temporary and local relief; terrorism cannot be fought piecemeal.

A sustainable strategy for stabilization of Afghanistan must be predicated upon short-, medium- and long-term strategies to address the developmental challenge. The efforts of the international community in Afghanistan can be sustained over the long term only if we invest in developing Afghan human resources. For that, a multipronged approach is required. At one level, we must invest in rebuilding the economic and social infrastructure of the nation, while generating jobs. At another, we must progressively transfer skills and authority to our Afghan friends, to enable them to take fuller ownership of the reconstruction of their country.

India is fully committed to implementing the benchmarks of the Afghanistan Compact and to addressing the interrelated security, political and developmental challenges facing Afghanistan. Our commitment to reconstruction, development and capacity-building in Afghanistan is unflinching. India's assistance programme, in place since the Berlin Conference, has now reached $750 million. Of this total pledge, India has already disbursed around $300 million in the implementation of assistance projects that span the gamut of requirements, ranging from capacity-building to infrastructure creation and reconstruction.

Capacity-building is a priority area for India. Thus far, we have trained more than 2,700 Afghan citizens in India, including students and public officials. We are also implementing a capacity development programme in public administration, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, to depute 30 Indian civil servants to assist in Afghan ministries. In addition, India is including a strong capacity development component in all infrastructure projects it is executing in Afghanistan.

Apart from ongoing megainfrastructure projects, India is also focusing on small development projects. These include endeavours requiring the participation of local communities and aimed at providing direct peace dividends in areas that are yet to see development. India has worked to align its assistance programmes with Afghan priorities, focusing on local implementation, management and ownership of assets.

Regional cooperation is also a key pillar to stabilizing Afghanistan. Regional economic cooperation is an important benchmark of the Afghanistan Compact and is a strategic element of its National Development Strategy. Afghanistan's entry into the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in April 2007 will not only further strengthen its historical links with the South Asian

region, but will also provide the region lasting benefits in free trade and shared economic activities. All of this has the potential to contribute, in turn, to the stabilization of Afghanistan itself, but also of our region. In this context, several important regional cooperation events have taken place over the past few years, including the Regional Economic Cooperation Conferences in Kabul and New Delhi.

However, the central challenge in our region is the need to develop measures to implement programmes evolved in regional processes. These include resolving impediments that hinder the expansion of commercial and economic linkages, including barriers to effective overland trade and transit, limited regional trade and business linkages, and other measures that can contribute to the early realization of Afghanistan's historic role as a land bridge between South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia. At the same time, our region also needs to consider ways of addressing regional and transregional political and security challenges, such as cross-border terrorism, cooperation in regional enforcement and in identifying collective approaches to expand governance and enforcement capacities.

It is our conviction that the best riposte to those who challenge the supportive role of the international community in Afghanistan is to display our heightened resolve. At the same time, we must also work together in a more effective partnership with one another and the Government of Afghanistan. Most of all, we should expand regional cooperation in the common interest of all. Finally, our efforts to achieve greater donor coherence need to be paralleled by efforts to build incrementally on the many impressive successes recorded thus far.

These are the key elements for us to build upon the gains collectively made since the fall of the Taliban.

Mr. McNee (Canada): Canada appreciates this opportunity to address the General Assembly on the situation in Afghanistan. Canada, alongside a large group of Member States, has participated in cooperative efforts, skilfully led by the German delegation, to produce today's draft resolution (A/62/L.7) on Afghanistan. We are extremely pleased to co-sponsor its passage.

The breadth of the draft resolution, and its eventual adoption by consensus by the entire membership of the General Assembly, demonstrates the depth of the international community's engagement in Afghanistan. It also signals our collective intention to continue to support the Afghan Government. But however strong the text may be, the draft resolution will only be as effective as our collective resolve to implement it. That means building on the gains achieved to date, while confronting continuing challenges with action. Thanks to the fortitude of the Afghan people, the tireless work of the Afghan Government and the growing engagement of the international community, those efforts are bearing fruit.

Afghans are beginning to emerge from poverty, with the help of small loans. The Afghan army is increasingly able to defend Afghan sovereignty and a new generation of Afghan children is learning to read and write. Those are important gains, achieved against daunting odds. Afghans and the international community should be proud of those accomplishments, but realistic about their fragility and candid about the areas in which progress is still urgently required.

The draft resolution before us is clear: for those achievements to be sustained, Afghanistan and the international community must do more. We must do more to enhance regional cooperation. We must do more to support the development of a professional Afghan police force. We must do more to strengthen the Afghan justice system. Success in each of those areas is fundamental to Afghanistan's future.

Shared problems require shared solutions. Thousands of people travel between Afghanistan and Pakistan every day. Legitimate trade between the two countries has been increasing considerably. The potential for Afghanistan to generate customs revenue is great. Capitalizing on that potential will require constructive collaboration on practical management measures. It will also involve intensive efforts to ensure that insurgents, illicit drugs and arms do not cross into Afghanistan.

Confidence- and capacity-building between Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as other regional partners, will be critical. In that vein, Canada welcomes the results of the Afghanistan-Pakistan peace jirga, and urges both States to begin to address important issues highlighted during that historic event. Canada stands ready to work with the Afghan and Pakistani Governments to advance the conclusions of that meeting.

Afghanistan's future will also depend on a professional, effective and respected national police force — one that will serve as the cornerstone of Afghanistan's long-term domestic security and build public confidence in the national Government. Canada therefore welcomes the draft resolution's call for accelerated efforts to professionalize and strengthen the Afghan National Police. Canada is assisting the policing sector through the provision of training, infrastructure and salary support. However, progress in police development will require more coherent action by the Afghan Government and its international partners.

(*spoke in French*)

A strong justice sector is necessary in order to ensure that the primacy of the rule is well understood and respected in the entire country in the future. Along with the draft resolution's other sponsors, Canada calls on the Afghan Government to finalize its national justice sector strategy and national justice programme. We also call on our international partners to help provide the necessary support for the Afghan justice system. Moreover, Afghanistan and its international partners must honour the commitments made this year at the Rome Conference. Canada intends to do its part in that regard, including by supporting the priority projects identified at the Conference by the Afghan Government.

Canada would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to the United Nations for its central role and impartiality in efforts made in Afghanistan. In all of the areas to which I have referred today — regional cooperation, policing and justice sector reform — the United Nations must provide strong leadership with a view to ensuring that Afghanistan can continue to make progress down the path of security and independence.

As the primary representative of the international community in Afghanistan, the United Nations must also enhance its coordinating role, in particular by deepening and expanding its presence. To that end, Canada remains committed to supporting the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and United Nations agencies active on the ground.

In conclusion, we encourage other Member States to ensure that the United Nations is endowed with the capacity and latitude needed to continue to exercise leadership in support of the Government of Afghanistan and all Afghans.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): May I begin by extending our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports on various aspects of the situation in Afghanistan. I would also like to thank him and his Special Representative, as well as all their colleagues in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, for their unwavering commitment and commendable dedication to the consolidation of peace and stability in Afghanistan. We continue to stress and support the central and essential role that the United Nations is playing in Afghanistan.

In the past several years, by taking various steps to establish democratic institutions and a vibrant political system, the Afghan people, led by President Karzai, have demonstrated their firm commitment to a stable and democratic future. Moreover, the most recent report (A/62/345) of the Secretary-General on Afghanistan highlights a number of promising improvements in the economic and social fields. That includes in particular valuable achievements with regard to economic growth, education, health, building infrastructure and rural development. We commend the Afghan people for those remarkable achievements. We assure them of our ongoing full support in their endeavours to rebuild their country.

Despite those remarkable accomplishments, much remains to be done. As indicated by the Secretary-General in his report, the security situation in the country and the threat of opium production and drug trafficking have increased and continue to be of grave concern.

Increased terrorist attacks and violence in certain parts of Afghanistan caused by Al-Qaida, the Taliban and other criminal and terrorist groups, coupled with a pervasive drug economy and an increase in the production and trafficking of narcotic drugs, have created alarming challenges that seriously undermine the security of the country and beyond.

As an immediate neighbour of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran has a vital interest in a stable, secure and prosperous Afghanistan and in an Afghanistan free from terrorism and extremism. Iran has always been unequivocal in its condemnation of the heinous terrorist acts committed in Afghanistan and has extended its full support to the efforts of the

Afghan Government to improve the security and economic situation in the country. We believe that the increase in insecurity in Afghanistan and the recent increase in terrorist activities clearly suggest that the unwarranted attempts made by certain foreign Powers in Afghanistan to appease some terrorist groups and elements have proved to be wrong and counterproductive.

Undoubtedly, to address the insecurity in Afghanistan, full national ownership of Afghans over the security of their country should be expedited. That can be done through, inter alia, strengthening the autonomy and integrity of the Afghan National Security Forces and increasing home-grown security. The reconstruction of infrastructure, capacity-building and utilizing regional potentials for the reconstruction of the country can also contribute to the improvement of the situation in Afghanistan.

Unfortunately, as a producer of 93 per cent of the world's opiates, Afghanistan is experiencing the biggest opium harvest in its history. The cultivation and production of and trafficking in narcotic drugs in Afghanistan, which adversely affect that country's economic reconstruction and undermine its stability and security, along with those of the wider region, especially neighbouring countries, continue unabated.

In our view, the impact of a pervasive drug economy on the security, rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan, and the fact that terrorism and insurgency feed on drug production and trafficking, should always be kept in sight in all efforts to address the security situation and reconstruction of Afghanistan. Combating that menace requires a long-term and multifaceted strategy and more serious efforts by Afghanistan and the international community. Indeed, the present situation attests to the bitter fact that the international community has not yet been successful in curbing the scourge of narcotic drugs in Afghanistan, and those foreign forces in the country that have been entrusted with certain responsibilities in that regard have not fulfilled their task satisfactorily.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has fought, almost single-handedly, a costly and deadly war against heavily armed drug traffickers. As I stated in a meeting of the Security Council, over the past 25 years we have lost about 4,000 of our great and brave law enforcement personnel, who have sacrificed their lives to fight that vicious threat. We continue to be resolute at the forefront of the worldwide war against drug traffickers and encourage others to join us in that important fight in order to save our present as well as future generations from the devastating impacts of the calamity.

By pledging more than half a billion dollars in grants and credits to the reconstruction of Afghanistan, Iran has been actively participating in the country's reconstruction. We have been engaged in various infrastructure activities in Afghanistan, including road construction, manpower training, electricity projects, humanitarian services and many other projects. Moreover, we have just started the second phase of our development assistance to Afghanistan, granting about $50 million at a demanding time, while several important agreements, including a general agreement on bilateral cooperation and on capacity-building of Afghan ministries were also signed between the two countries during our President's visit to Kabul in August.

Furthermore, Iran has incurred huge costs during the past three decades by hosting almost 3 million Afghan brothers and sisters as refugees. We earnestly hope that conditions in Afghanistan will facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees to their home country in a more timely and promising manner.

Before concluding, we are pleased to see the full support of member countries for the draft resolution at hand. Also, allow me to thank the delegation of Germany for its efforts in the negotiating process of the draft resolution before us today.

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now hear a statement by Mr. Alberto Romulo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines.

Mr. Romulo (Philippines): My delegation welcomes the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan still faces challenges in view of the serious insurgency problem. With the support of the international community, including my own country, which co-sponsored draft resolution A/62/L.7, we are confident that progress in all fronts will improve the situation in Afghanistan.

With the Assembly's kind indulgence, I would now like to touch on agenda item 12, on the topic of new or restored democracies.

The opening years of the post-cold-war era were defined by the immutable gust of democratic wind that lifted many nations to democratic heights. Building on the momentum created by the fresh breeze of democracy, several nations banded together and created the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies (ICNRD). Spanning six international conferences in the past 19 years, that movement remains strong and eager to further invigorate its cooperation with the United Nations.

The first Conference, held in Manila, Philippines, in 1988, and open to all newly restored democracies, accounted for 15 countries that emerged from authoritarian rule to constitutional democracy from 1973 to 1988. Participating countries issued the Manila Declaration, which mainly called for a consultative mechanism for mutual cooperation in times of danger and crisis to their restored democracies.

The second Conference, held in Managua, Nicaragua, in 1994, saw participation grow to 52 countries from a wave of new democracies that emerged between 1989 and the early 1990s. They adopted the Managua Declaration, which introduced a plan of action to promote international dialogue on democracy focused on structural vulnerabilities, the isolated transition process and the common principles and interests of interdependence.

The third Conference, held in Bucharest, Romania, in 1997, had 100 participating countries, including democracies from Eastern and Central Europe. It pushed for the participation of civil society, affirmed the important role of the United Nations, and recognizes that democracy ensures a framework of liberties for lasting solutions to economic, political and social problems.

The fourth Conference, held in Cotonou, Benin, in 2000, had 114 countries from the wave of political liberalization that swept Africa in the mid-1990s. There were many firsts. The Secretary-General attended, civil society held a parallel forum, and regional and international organizations joined in. The Conference highlighted the importance of national responsibility, human rights, political pluralism, people's empowerment, the rule of law, good governance, the freedom of media, and a free civil society.

The fifth Conference, held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, in 2003, was comprehensive in terms of preparation, participation and outcome documents. It noted the global support for democratization at the national, regional and international levels.

The sixth Conference, held in Doha, Qatar, in 2006, was the most elaborate in terms of scope and breadth of participation and outcomes. It institutionalized the tripartite partnership of Governments, parliaments and civil society.

The Philippines is grateful to the United Nations Development Programme and the Department of Political Affairs for the support they have extended to the ICNRD. We look forward to their continued cooperation, as well as that of the rest of the United Nations system, not only in preparation for the triennial conferences, but also throughout the ICNRD process, in particular during the follow-up period. For that reason, my delegation co-sponsored draft resolution A/62/L.9, calling for the support of the United Nations system to promote new or restored democracies.

To enrich and strengthen the ICNRD process, the Philippines wishes to reiterate the recommendations it made in Doha, which were adopted by the Conference.

First, migration and development are essential elements of the ICNRD. Citizens of new or restored democracies are found beyond their borders, assisting both their countries of origin and countries of destination. Their potential to promote development should be both recognized and harnessed, in tandem with respect for and protection of their rights. The United Nations system is likewise invited to mainstream the element of migration and development in its partnership with the ICNRD. In that connection, the Philippines invites Member States and the United Nations system to join us in Manila when we host next year the Second Global Forum on Migration and Development.

Secondly, new or restored democracies are burdened by debt. To breathe life into their painful development process, which can threaten their stability if unattended, the Philippines has proposed an innovative development financing option called Debt For Equity in Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Projects, which would enable 50 per cent of all scheduled debt payments to be converted into equities in MDG-related projects. It will be beneficial to debtor and creditor alike. The scheme can strengthen the resolve of poor indebted countries to fight poverty and

create the needed fundamentals for democracy and sustainable development.

Thirdly, the spirit of reconciliation is needed to ensure durable peace among new or restored democracies through interreligious and intercultural respect, tolerance and understanding. As a key proponent of interfaith dialogue and cooperation, the Philippines invites Governments, the United Nations system and civil society to adhere to the spirit of interfaith dialogue and cooperation for the promotion of peace, development and human dignity.

Finally, the ICNRD follow-up process can effectively prosper given the requisite resources. Thus, my delegation invites the United Nations to set up a trust fund for new or restored democracies, in addition to the Democracy Fund, so that the decisions reached in Doha can come to fruition. My delegation also recommends that the ICNRD secretariat be housed at United Nations Headquarters, representing the United Nations system's tangible expression of support for the ICNRD.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): Kazakhstan fully aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic on behalf of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and by the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan on behalf of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. I will add only a few remarks in my national capacity.

I join my colleagues in commending the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on different aspects of the situation in Afghanistan and for his determination to be personally engaged in working with the Government of Afghanistan and other partners to ensure success in that country.

As President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbaev pointed out in his statement at a General Assembly plenary meeting in September, the difficulties involved in the process of stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan are a matter of concern to Kazakhstan. Peace and security in the entire Central Asian region depend on the stabilization of the situation in Afghanistan, and Kazakhstan is deeply interested in the speedy transition of life in that long-suffering country to a peaceful track and the restoration of its ruined economy.

Kazakhstan supports the central role of the United Nations in leading international efforts to assist the Afghan authorities in bringing lasting peace and prosperity to their country, and welcomes the positive achievements in the political, social and economic spheres as a result of the joint work of the Government of Afghanistan and the international community. We commend the determination of the Government of Afghanistan to contribute to regional security and prosperity, and share the view of the Secretary-General that progress will depend on the international community and the Government of Afghanistan better coordinating their efforts to defeat the insurgency, promote good governance and provide tangible improvements to the lives of Afghans.

As the report of the Secretary-General indicates, the unprecedented increase in opium production in 2007 poses a grave threat to reconstruction and nation-building in Afghanistan. Kazakhstan attaches great importance to the anti-drug activities of the United Nations as the main coordinating centre for international efforts on that track. We fully support the efforts and uncompromising determination of the Organization to overcome the global problem of the illegal drug trade on the basis of increased international cooperation and the development of national strategies to eliminate the illegal supply of and demand for drugs.

Reaffirming its commitment to actively cooperate with the United Nations against illegal drug threat, Kazakhstan has provided all the required conditions to establish within its territory the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre to combat the illegal drug trade, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and is determined to actively participate in the work of that body.

In the draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan, which we fully support and co-sponsor, it is pointed out that one effective means of promoting security and development in Afghanistan is regional cooperation, and we strongly believe that it is necessary to enable the potential of such regional organizations as the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia, which includes Afghanistan, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Collective Security Treaty Organization for the purpose of creating collective security mechanisms in order to cut the channels of financing for terrorist activities and drug trafficking from Afghanistan to Europe.

We fully share the view of the Secretary-General that the Government of Afghanistan must retain the trust of its neighbours by engaging constructively in bilateral and multilateral initiatives, including on counter-narcotics and migration issues, and by building its capacity to manage and deepen complex bilateral relationships. In our view, the active participation of Afghanistan in the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), which it joined in 2005, will greatly contribute to furthering the integration of Afghanistan into the regional economy. The Programme was initiated by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbaev in 1997 and is being pursued under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. SPECA has great potential in tackling the pressing issues of the region of Central Asia through the promotion of regional cooperation and coordination.

I should like briefly to address the issue of bilateral relations with Afghanistan. The Kazakhstan Government has elaborated a plan of assistance to Afghanistan for 2007-2008. Our country is ready to assist Afghanistan in the reconstruction of communications, house-building, and the development of new oil and gas deposits, as well as in personnel training in the spheres of economics, industry, finance, transport and education. The Government of Kazakhstan already provides 100 scholarships for Afghani students annually, participates in the construction of schools and hospitals, and provides school books for children in some provinces.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the commitment of the Government of Kazakhstan to the long-term reconstruction of Afghanistan and our readiness to participate actively in international and regional programmes in order to reach our common goal of a stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

Mr. Maksom (Malaysia): Let me first extend my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Afghanistan, as contained in document A/62/345 of 21 September 2007. The report provides a comprehensive description of the situation in Afghanistan and offers valuable observations on possible course of actions. My delegation also recognizes the valuable work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Mr. Tom Koenigs, and members of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) under the prevailing difficult and challenging conditions in the country.

My delegation congratulates the Government of Afghanistan on its commendable strides in developing the institutional capacities of the different branches of Government to fulfil their mandated responsibilities. We applaud the work carried out in the National Assembly, especially in the final drafting of the draft electoral law and the accompanying law to reform the Independent Electoral Commission, in anticipation of the next presidential and parliamentary elections in 2009 and 2010, respectively. That is a crucial step to further entrench the democratic process in the country. The National Assembly has also succeeded in passing a national budget and is currently working on a number of important laws, including the Advocates Law, the Media Law and a number of laws relevant to key security sector reforms.

My delegation also commends the progress made in improving the Government delivery system, notably in the economic development, education, health and rural development sectors. We are pleased to note the increasing number of children receiving education in Afghanistan, which has reached a record high of 6.07 million, including 2.17 million girls. We also note the improvement in health care, with health coverage reaching 82 per cent of the population. Likewise, the infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rate have been reduced to 3.5 per cent and 6.6 per cent, respectively.

Despite those achievements, we note with concern that the situation in Afghanistan remains fragile. A slight reverse in the security situation, especially with regard to the threat of insurgency and the credibility of the Government's ability to deliver further on the reform process, could undo all the progress made thus far.

In the light of those concerns, my delegation continues to remain apprehensive over the reported deterioration in the security sector. Violent attacks, including suicide attacks attributed to Al Qaeda, the Taliban and other armed extremist groups, have increased in the course of the year, especially in the southern and eastern provinces. We note the increase in violent incidents per month from 425 in 2006 to nearly 548 in the first three quarters of 2007, including a total of 100 suicide attacks. Those incidents have claimed many civilian lives. More alarming are the number of

deaths and injuries of a large and increasing number of civilians and non-combatants caused by the combat operations of both pro- and anti-Government forces. UNAMA recorded some 1,000 civilian deaths from January to 31 August. More efforts must therefore be made to protect civilians.

My delegation also views with concern the deteriorating narcotics situation in Afghanistan. In spite of the Government's counter-narcotic efforts, poppy cultivation has increased by 17 per cent, which potentially increases opium production by 34 per cent, thus making Afghanistan the world's main opium producing country. That situation has far-reaching security repercussions both for Afghanistan and countries beyond its borders. At the domestic level, the burgeoning poppy cultivation is creating a growing nexus between the narcotics trade and insurgent groups, and is feared to finance terrorism. Moreover, narcotics trade activities further exacerbate the corruption problem within Government and provincial machineries, which in the end may seriously erode the credibility and capacity of the Government.

We share the view that a resolution of the situation in Afghanistan would require an integrated and concerted civilian and military approach. Military actions alone will not be sufficient to overcome the root causes of the problem. The Government delivery system, including good governance and respect for human rights, should be improved to foster confidence in and the credibility of the Government among the Afghan population. There is also a need to carry out an all-inclusive national reconciliation process to avoid the marginalization of any group.

My delegation firmly believes that the sustained support of the international community remains indispensable if Afghanistan is to overcome the immediate challenges and to help it implement the National Development Strategy, which offers a viable prospect for lasting political stability and economic prosperity. We reiterate our support for UNAMA's continuing to play the central and impartial role in galvanizing different elements of international support and monitoring the implementation of the development and security strategies on the ground, in close consultation with the Afghan Government.

On Malaysia's part, we reiterate our commitment to cooperating and working closely with Afghanistan and, where appropriate, other members of the international community. We will continue to extend assistance to Afghanistan under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme to develop the much needed-human capital in various fields for Afghanistan's development.

Mr. Lee Do-hoon (Republic of Korea): Allow me to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the situation in Afghanistan (A/62/345). Our thanks also go to the delegation of Germany for coordinating the important draft resolution on the subject (A/62/L.7). The Republic of Korea is pleased to join the sponsors of the draft resolution.

Since the adoption of the Bonn Agreement in 2001, Afghanistan has achieved important political progress, despite many continuing challenges, culminating in the first-ever direct presidential election in October 2004, and parliamentary elections in September 2005. The international community must continue to work closely with Afghanistan to ensure that these successes have a lasting impact. We should not underestimate what has been accomplished, but neither should we believe that our work is nearing completion. There is still much to be done before comprehensive peace and recovery are achieved in Afghanistan.

As the Secretary-General's report acknowledges, a deteriorating security situation, coupled with uncontrolled violence and criminal drug trafficking, hamper not only the reconstruction process, but also the implementation of Afghanistan's national development strategy.

My delegation is deeply concerned about the continuing instability in some parts of Afghanistan. The gravity of the situation is underlined by the recent cases of abduction and murder of Afghan and foreign civilians, including the Taliban's kidnapping of 23 citizens of the Republic of Korea, two of whom were subsequently killed.

We agree with the Secretary-General's report that re-establishing lasting security requires a multidimensional strategy coordinating military, police, political and economic and social activities. Essential to the success of that strategy are the efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the International Security Assistance Force, as well as the coalition forces of Operation Enduring Freedom, working in close coordination with

the Government of Afghanistan and the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board.

We are also concerned by the increasing threat that drug trafficking poses to the national security, social development and governance of Afghanistan. Until the Afghan people can find other sources of income, many will continue to engage in that criminal business. We therefore share the view that the international community and the Afghan Government should work together to deal with that serious problem, which affects almost every aspect of Afghanistan's security and development.

The Republic of Korea strongly hopes that Afghanistan will continue to work towards fully implementing the national drug control strategy presented by its Government at the London Conference, and stands ready to join the international support for the strategy by contributing to the Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund.

To deal with those ongoing challenges, active efforts by the Afghan Government in a spirit of Afghan ownership must go hand in hand with assistance from the international community. In that regard, we note that many countries, including the Republic of Korea, have announced new financial assistance for Afghanistan since the London Conference. We believe that those announcements demonstrate donors' continuing confidence in Afghanistan.

The Republic of Korea has strongly supported the reconstruction process of Afghanistan. Building upon our contribution of approximately $60 million in grant aid to Afghanistan from 2001 to 2005, we have set aside $20 million for the subsequent three-year period for projects focusing on human resources development, agricultural and rural development and public administration. In addition, engineering and medical units from our armed forces have been contributing to the Afghan reconstruction process since their deployment in February 2002.

As a sponsor of the draft resolution on Afghanistan now before us, the Republic of Korea once again pledges to renew its unwavering support for the people and Government of Afghanistan in their pursuit of peace and prosperity.

Mr. Çorman (Turkey): Turkey aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union. However, given the importance we attach to the situation in Afghanistan, as well as our extensive involvement in the reconstruction efforts in that country, I would like to briefly add our voice to the debate.

The draft resolution we are to adopt today (A/62/L.7) and the great number of sponsors supporting it underline the priority of Afghanistan on our common agenda. It also demonstrates the determination of the international community to assist and support the Afghan people during their difficult times.

In fact, we have already started to see some positive results of that common endeavour. With the help of the international community, much has been achieved during the last few years reflecting the genuine desire of the Afghan people for an independent and democratic Afghanistan. Yet, there are many factors which prevent us from becoming all too optimistic. The security situation is still precarious; terrorists are now resorting to different tactics, such as suicide bombs and kidnappings; poppy production continues; and there are still certain problems of governance.

That said, those rather discouraging factors should not dishearten us in helping the Afghan people and Government. On the contrary, they should oblige us to redouble our efforts in assisting Afghanistan in a more efficient and result-oriented way.

For Turkey's part, we do all we can to contribute to the security and stability of Afghanistan in line with our centuries-old ties of close friendship with the Afghan people. Indeed, following our lead in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF II and ISAF VII), we have continued to maintain our active participation in the Force by assuming the leadership of the Regional Command in Kabul as of April 2007. Together with recent reinforcements, we now have about 1,200 troops in Afghanistan.

However, we all know that achieving our goals in Afghanistan requires more than military means alone. Indeed, issues such as unemployment, health care, access to clean water, and electricity shortages occupy the minds of the Afghan people at least as much as security considerations. Thus we need a comprehensive and practical approach.

It is true that serious projects are already underway to address the shortcomings in those areas

and improve the infrastructure of the country. But many of the projects require a long time to be completed. The Afghan people, however, need to see tangible and rapid changes in their daily lives. Therefore, providing new employment opportunities, ensuring the delivery of basic services and generating a viable local economy should be among our leading priorities. To that end, we must utilize the services of more Afghan companies and employ more Afghan personnel in our projects.

Turkey, for its part, is certainly committed to doing so. That is why Afghan participation and ownership is a key principle that guides us in all the development and reconstruction projects we continue to carry out in various parts of Afghanistan.

In that regard, our projects are concentrated mainly in those areas that can make a most immediate and visible impact on the lives of the Afghan people, such as health, education, agriculture and construction activities. For instance Turkish-built, equipped and operated health centres in Afghanistan provide free medical treatment to some 900 patients a day. The number of Afghan citizens who received such medical treatment in those health centres has so far exceeded 750,000.

We have also built and equipped 27 schools in various parts of Afghanistan, which provide modern education to almost 40,000 Afghan students — girls and boys alike. In addition to 13 new schools that will be completed soon, Turkish non-governmental organizations are also running 6 private schools across the country. Likewise, the number of safe drinking-water wells drilled by Turkey across the country has already exceeded 60 and we have many more in the pipeline.

On the other hand, one of the most tangible examples of our commitment to the Afghan people's stability and prosperity is the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) that we established one year ago in the province of Wardak. This PRT carries out various projects ranging from police training to literacy courses for Afghan girls and women, from electricity interconnection to agricultural development.

No matter how much we strive to improve the security and economic environment inside Afghanistan, regional cooperation remains key to ensuring long-term stability in Afghanistan and beyond. With this in mind, Turkey is working closely with all the regional countries, in particular with Pakistan and Afghanistan. In this regard, we have initiated a trilateral mechanism to build confidence and diversify areas of cooperation between the two countries.

As mentioned in the draft resolution before the Assembly (A/62/L.7), the Ankara process, which was launched at the trilateral summit meeting held in Turkey on 29 and 30 April 2007, is an important means for strengthening regional cooperation, and we are committed to taking it forward with concrete projects.

As a final word, I would like to stress once again that achieving our common goals in Afghanistan will not be an easy or swift process. We all must be ready for a long-term engagement in Afghanistan. We should also prepare public opinion and parliaments accordingly. We ought to realize that failure is not an option. Indeed, Afghanistan remains a central element in our efforts to achieve global security, and, if we do not succeed, no one will be spared from the dire consequences.

The United Nations has a central role to play in coordinating the efforts of the international community and assisting the Afghan Government in its endeavours to achieve lasting peace and stability. Under the able leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan much has already been achieved to this end under extremely difficult circumstances. The Afghanistan Compact, in particular, has provided a most useful road map. However, we believe there is still room for an even more active and robust engagement on the part of the United Nations. Thus, we hope that the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General will, when appointed, carry the banner even further and enable the United Nations to utilize its full capacity. Turkey is committed to exerting every effort in support of the United Nations and Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I would like to express our sincere thanks to the German Mission for leading the consultations on the draft resolution before us today. We are pleased to be sponsoring it and hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of the Republic of Uzbekistan fully supports today's statements by the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations on behalf of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and by the Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz

Republic on behalf of the member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. We share the main points set out in those statements.

Our country is a direct neighbour of Afghanistan and has shared many centuries of good neighbourly relations with it. We are sincerely interested in establishing a peaceful and stable Afghan State. Uzbekistan, like many other countries of the international community today, is making every possible effort and is taking practical steps to assist the Afghan people in the speedy stabilization of the situation in that country.

Objectively taking into account the real situation within and around Afghanistan, we consider one of the factors that serve to consolidate stability in Afghanistan to be measures taken to integrate that country into the political and economic system of communications and links among the countries of Central Asia. In this context, it is important to increase Afghanistan's participation in the process of creating a common market in the region. Afghanistan's participation as an observer country in the activities with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization — is very significant.

It should be noted that a particular role in improving the socio-economic situation in Afghanistan and in the development of the integrated process is being played by transport communications. In this connection, we draw attention to the importance of implementing the initiative to create an international trans-Afghan transport corridor. For our part, we are ready to expand cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan in very diverse areas, such as prospecting, power generation and local and international telecommunication lines, and so on. We assure the Assembly that this kind of economic cooperation serves the interests of Afghanistan, its neighbouring countries and the international community as a whole.

Central Asia, due to its growing geopolitical and geostrategic significance, as well as its huge natural economic and resource potential, is drawing the attention of many countries of the world community. However, Central Asia unfortunately continues to remain in focus as a region where there are continued threats and challenges to security and stability. One of the main reasons for this is continuing tension in Afghanistan. We must be seriously concerned by the situation in that country today, characterized by a trend to further deterioration against the background of significant military actions by Taliban movement.

The continuing growth in the volume, production and traffic of drugs is evoking growing concern on the part of the international community and the States of the region. In order to counter this threat, security zones must be created around the country and there must be profound structural reform in the Afghan economy. Without this, narcotics coupled with terrorism will remain the main threats to the national security of Afghanistan and to the effective functioning of the Government.

One of the serious factors complicating and aggravating the situation in the country is the huge arsenal of military technology, weapons and ammunition accumulated over the decades of war in Afghanistan. As noted by our President in his letter to the Secretary-General in 2001, the gradual process of stabilization of the situation and restoration of peaceful life in Afghanistan must be accompanied by a solution to the question of the reduction and removal of those mountains of armaments, which would make it possible to create the necessary prerequisites for preventing further militarization of this country.

We are profoundly convinced that achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan must occur not through further militarization and expansion in the scale of the use of force, but rather through demilitarization and through the implementation, with the assistance of the world community, of projects aimed chiefly at resolving the most acute economic problems, as well as by giving social support to the population of the country.

Agreed joint actions by all parties that are truly interested in stabilizing the situation and promoting reconstruction in Afghanistan will be the decisive factor in finding solutions to this problem. That is why Uzbekistan welcomed the draft resolution submitted today by the delegation of Germany. We hope that its adoption by consensus will reaffirm once again the international community's willingness to do everything possible to promote the peaceful recovery of Afghanistan.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/62/L.7. I should like to announce

that since the introduction of the draft resolution the following countries have become sponsors: Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chile, China, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gabon, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, India, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Moldova, Monaco, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Korea, San Marino, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine and Yemen.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.7?

Draft resolution A/62/L.7 was adopted (resolution 62/6).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 19?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.

United Nations A/62/PV.46

General Assembly
Sixty-second session

Official Records

46th plenary meeting
Thursday, 8 November 2007, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 12 (continued)

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Draft resolution (A/62/L.9)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this Agenda item at its 44th plenary meeting, on 5 November 2007.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/62/L.9. Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of vote before the vote, may I remind the delegates that explanations of vote are limited to ten minutes and should be made by delegates from their seats.

Mr. Chernenko (The Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation supports Qatar's draft resolution entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies." We support and actively participate in the intergovernmental process under United Nations auspices, characterized by its openness and based on the principle of constructive engagement.

In our opinion, the process of new or restored democracies seeks to resolve two interrelated tasks. First of all, it performs an important function in providing a forum to exchange positive experiences in democratic construction and strengthening the foundation and principles of democracy. Secondly, and no less important, is its provision of support to States as they request it. We are convinced that this type of exchange of experience and constructive involvement will allow us to enrich the very concept of democracy and give new substance to its principles.

As was correctly noted in this draft resolution, there is not a single model or single recipe for democracy in our world. All attempts to impose unilateral approaches, any attempts to forcibly inculcate or implant, in different parts of the world, one's own approaches to democracy are fraught with the most negative consequences on the stability of different countries and regions.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the vote. The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/62/L.9. I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Albania, the Bahamas, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, the Comoros, the Czech Republic, Germany, Japan, Kuwait, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Monaco, Montenegro, Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Thailand, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.9?

Draft resolution A/62/L.9 was adopted (resolution 62/7).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

07-58830 (E)

The President: Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of vote, may I remind delegations that explanation of votes are limited to ten minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Ehouzou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Benin welcomes the adoption of draft resolution A/62/L.9, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" for several reasons. As the host country of the Fourth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Cotonou from 4 to 6 December 2000, Benin remains strongly committed to strengthening democracy in Africa and to the process of the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies.

On top of organizing various missions to exchange experiences, which makes it possible to weave a dense network of international cooperation and consultation with democratic national institutions, Benin was one of the main forces at the African level in the drafting of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which was adopted by the African Union in January 2007, at Addis Ababa. This text is a priceless victory for the peoples of the African continent.

Benin is closely following the development of the New or Restored Democracies Movement. We express our great appreciation to Qatar for its initiatives within the framework of the follow-up to the implementation of the final declaration of the Sixth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Doha in November 2006. We must also welcome the activities of the Advisory Board that was established to assist the Chairman in Office of the Movement in his efforts to ensure a systematic implementation of the recommendations contained in the Doha declaration.

It is also fortunate that within this framework the Advisory Board was able to adopt its plan of action for the 2007-2009 period. It is important that member States be able to cooperate closely in its implementation through practical actions having an impact on the ability of democratic institutions to play their role in the operation of democratic systems put in place.

Benin thanks all the countries that have taken different initiatives to support the efforts of new or restored democracies in their efforts to strengthen their national institutions and to promote good governance so that democracy can go hand in hand with economic growth and sustainable development.

The Secretary-General has presented a very informative report on Government initiatives and makes it possible to assess the dynamic of solidarity showed by the international community for new or restored democracies, but also the bold actions that those democracies have been carrying out in order to strengthen their democratic achievements. We must be grateful for these developments. It would be desirable for the next report to deal with the efforts of the United Nations system.

My delegation reiterates its steadfast support for the process of the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies as a framework for discussion and action in order to strengthen the advances made by new or restored democracies. That is why we fully support the resolution that has just been adopted on support for new or restored democracies.

The President: We have heard all the speakers in explanation of vote. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 12?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 112 (continued)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(b) Election of eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council

Letter from Germany (A/62/159)

The President: The Assembly will first proceed to a by-election to elect a member of the Economic and Social Council in accordance with rule 140 of the rules of procedure.

In this connection, I would first like to draw the attention of members to document A/62/159, containing a letter dated 23 July 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations. In his letter, the Chargé d'affaires announces that Germany would like to relinquish its seat on the Economic and Social Council at the end of the year 2007 for the remaining

term in favour of Liechtenstein. As a result, a vacancy will occur and the new member must therefore be elected to fill Germany's unexpired term of office, commencing 1 January 2008 and expiring on 31 December 2008.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 2847 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971 and taking into account that the vacancy will occur from among the Western European and other States, the new member should therefore be elected from that region.

I should like to inform the Assembly that the candidate who receives a two-thirds majority and the greatest number of votes by Members present and voting will be declared elected. In the case of a tie vote, there will be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates who have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations. Also in accordance with rule 92, we shall proceed to the election by secret ballot.

I should like to inform members that, as of 1 January 2008, the following States from the Group of Western European and other States will be represented on the Economic and Social Council: Austria, Canada, France, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United States of America. The names of these eight States should therefore not appear on the ballot.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write on them the name of the State for which they wish to vote. A ballot will be declared invalid if it contains the name of more than one Member State from the relevant region for the one vacant seat assigned to it. A ballot will also be declared invalid if the name of the Member State on that ballot does not belong to the relevant region.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ehrmann (Austria), Ms. Molemele (Botswana), Ms. Beshimova (Kyrgyzstan), Mrs. Zanelli (Peru) and Mr. Mićić (Serbia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.40 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B – Western European and Other States
(1 seat)

Number of ballot papers:	180
Number of invalid ballots:	14
Number of valid ballots:	166
Abstentions:	14
Number of Members voting:	152
Required two-thirds majority:	102
Number of votes obtained:	
Liechtenstein	129
Sweden	8
Iceland	6
United Kingdom	5
Germany	3
Switzerland	1

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, Liechtenstein has thus been elected a member of the Economic and Social Council for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2008 and ending on 31 December 2008.

I congratulate Liechtenstein on having been elected a member of the Economic and Social Council.

The General Assembly will next turn to the election of 18 members of the Economic and Social Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2007.

The 18 outgoing members are: Albania, Brazil, Chad, China, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Guinea, Iceland, India, Lithuania, Mexico, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Thailand and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Pursuant to rule 146 of the rules of procedure, these countries are eligible for immediate re-election.

Members will recall that Germany relinquished its seat on the Economic and Social Council, effective 1 January 2008 and Liechtenstein has just been elected to fill that vacancy.

Consequently, as of 1 January 2008, the following States will be represented on the Economic and Social Council: Algeria, Angola, Austria, Barbados, Belarus, Benin, Bolivia, Canada, Cape Verde, Cuba, the Czech Republic, El Salvador, France, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, the Netherlands, Paraguay, the Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, the Sudan and the United States of America. The names of these 36 States should therefore not appear on the ballots.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 2847 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971, and taking into account the number of States that will remain members of the Council after 1 January 2008, the 18 members should be elected as follows: four from African States, four from Asian States, three from Eastern European States, three from Latin American and Caribbean States and four from Western European and other States. The ballot papers reflect this pattern.

I should like to inform the Assembly that those candidates, their number not exceeding the number of seats to be filled, who receive a two-thirds majority of votes and the greatest number of votes and by Members present and voting, will be declared elected. In the case of a tie vote for a remaining seat, there will be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates that have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

Regarding candidatures of the respective regional groups, the Secretariat has been informed that for the four vacant seats from among the African States, the Group has endorsed four candidates: Cameroon, the Congo, Mozambique and the Niger. For the four vacant seats from among the Asian States, the Group has endorsed four candidates: China, Malaysia, Pakistan and the Republic of Korea. For the three vacant seats from among the Eastern European States, the Group has endorsed three candidates: Moldova, Poland and the Russian Federation. For the three vacant seats from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, the Group has endorsed three candidates: Brazil, Saint Lucia and Uruguay. For the four vacant seats from among the Western European and other States, the Group has endorsed four candidates: Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall now proceed to the election by secret ballot.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

I should like to seek the usual cooperation of representatives during the time of the conduct of the election. Please be reminded that during the voting process, all campaigning should cease in the General Assembly Hall. This means in particular that once the meeting has begun, no more campaign material can be distributed inside the Hall. All delegates are also requested to remain at their seats so that the voting process can proceed in an orderly manner. I thank members for their cooperation.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked A, B, C, D and E will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write on them the names of the States for which they wish to vote.

A ballot will be declared invalid if it contains more names of Member States from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it. A ballot will also be declared invalid if all the names of the Member States on the ballot do not belong to the relevant region. If a ballot paper for a region contains some of the names of the Member States that do not belong to the region, the ballot remains valid but only the names of the Member States that belong to the relevant region

will be counted. The names of Member States that do not belong to that region will not be counted at all.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ehrmann (Austria), Ms. Molemele (Botswana), Ms. Beshimova (Kyrgyzstan), Mrs. Zanelli (Peru) and Mr. Mićić (Serbia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 12.30 p.m.

Mr. Jallow (Gambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group A – African States (4 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	188
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	188
Abstentions:	1
Numbers of Members voting:	187
Required two-thirds majority:	125
Number of votes obtained:	
Cameroon	183
Congo	183
Mozambique	184
Niger	183
Nigeria	2
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1
Somalia	1
Sudan	1

Group B – Asian States (4 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	188
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	188
Abstentions:	0
Numbers of Members voting:	188
Required two-thirds majority:	126
Number of votes obtained:	
China	181
Malaysia	185
Pakistan	177
Republic of Korea	179
Qatar	1
Saudi Arabia	1
Lao People's Democratic Republic	1

Group C – Eastern European States (3 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	188
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	188
Abstentions:	3
Numbers of Members voting:	185
Required two-thirds majority:	124
Number of votes obtained:	
Moldova	184
Russian Federation	180
Poland	176
Albania	1
Belarus	1

Group D – Latin American and Caribbean States (3 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	188
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	188
Abstentions:	2
Numbers of Members voting:	186
Required two-thirds majority:	124
Number of votes obtained:	
Brazil	182
Saint Lucia	181
Uruguay	181
Costa Rica	1
Mexico	1

Group E – Western European and other States (4 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	188
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	188
Abstentions:	5
Numbers of Members voting:	183
Required two-thirds majority:	122
Number of votes obtained:	
Iceland	178
New Zealand	174
Sweden	174
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	174
Denmark	2

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority of Members present and voting, the following 18 States have thus been elected members of the Economic and Social Council for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2008: Brazil, Cameroon, China, the Congo, Iceland, Malaysia, Moldova, Mozambique, New

Zealand, Niger, Pakistan, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Uruguay.

I congratulate the States which have been elected members of the Economic and Social Council, and I thank the tellers for their assistance in this election.

This concludes our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 112.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.